

# OFFICIAL COPY

Holt, Gina

**From:** Sharon Jenkins <sharonjenkins@conneesteefalls.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2017 1:03 PM  
**To:** Holt, Gina  
**Subject:** Docket No.W-354, Sub 356

**FILED**  
**JUN 22 2017**  
Clerk's Office  
N.C. Utilities Commission

Dear Ms. Holt:

I am writing on behalf of the Conneestee Falls Property Owners Association, Inc. We are a residential community located in Brevard, North Carolina.

We, and our residents have just received notification of a proposed rate increase by Carolina Water Service, Inc.

Our first concern is the location of the Public Hearings. The closest to Brevard would be in Asheville, North Carolina on Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at 7 pm. That's a good 50 minute drive from our community and with a number of our residents being senior citizens we feel that would put an undue hardship for them to drive to Asheville and back at night.

First, is there anyone we can talk with about having one of the Public Hearings here in our community in Brevard, North Carolina. We would be happy to provide a meeting place for their use.

Secondly, one of our members has provided us with the below scenario for her personal situation if the rate hike is approved:

After comparing the rates from our water/sewer bill to the rate increase notice, it appears that CWS is proposing the following monthly charges based upon our meter type:

	Current	Proposed	%Increase/Decrease
Water Base Charge	\$27.41	\$26.95	-2%
Water Rate per 1000 gallons	\$6.65	\$7.70	+16%
Sewer Base Charge	\$26.86	\$48.59	+81%
Sewer Rate 1000 gallons	\$6.75	\$3.32	-51%

The Sewer Base Charge increase of 81% is extraordinary and will increase our annual sewer base charge from \$260.76 to \$583.08. Every home owner at Conneestee will be impacted as will the CFPOA's water and sewer bill. The rate increases appear to be based on the size of the meter which could vary by household. I could find no rationale for the proposed sewer base charge increase in the letter from CWS, which I find troubling.

The first Public Hearing on the change in rates will be in Asheville at 7PM on Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at the Buncombe County Court House. I suggest some Board, Administration and CFPOA members consider attending the hearing to find out what is driving the sewer base charge increase and what service level improvements will accompany this increase. We would be happy to attend that meeting.

The parent company of CWS, Utilities, Inc., is a privately held corporation that has water and sewer operations in 17 states. It is known for high prices, poor service and water quality issues in most of its service areas. Take a look at this link from Clean Water for North Carolina as an example: <http://cwfnc.org/what-we-do/water-justice/concerns-about-utilities-inc/> The CWS operation serving 2000 customers near Columbia, SC has been the most heavily fined utility by SC for continual discharges of untreated sewage into the Saluda River. Apparently they believe it is cheaper to pay fines than correct sewage treatment issues. We should ask CWS what actions/investments are they going to take to prevent future sewage spills into our lakes.

Is there anyone with the Public Staff's office that can represent us in this matter?

Thank you!

Best wishes,



Sharon Jenkins, Acting General Manager  
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