

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024
8:30 AM

Present: Donald L. Porter, Chairman
Christopher G. Davis, Vice Chairman
Ronna Rowe Garrett, Secretary
Richard W. King, Treasurer

Others Present: Timothy L. Bryant, CEO/General Manager
Derrick Thompson, City Council Liaison
Malik Davis, City Council Member
Media

Absent: Michael Boose, Cumberland County Liaison

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

Chairman Donald Porter called the meeting of February 28, 2024, to order at 8:30 am.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Donald Porter led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Christopher Davis motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ronna Rowe Garrett, and unanimously approved.

II. CONSENT ITEMS

Upon motion by Commissioner Ronna Rowe Garrett, seconded by Commissioner Christopher Davis, Consent Items were unanimously approved.

- A. Approve Minutes of meeting of February 14, 2024
- B. Approve bid recommendation to award bid for the purchase of Relay Control Switchboards to Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Charlotte, NC, the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder, in the total amount of \$451,490.00, and forward to City Council for approval.

The Relay Control Switchboards will be bond funded.

Bids were received December 1, 2023, as follows:

<u>Bidders</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Charlotte, NC	\$451,490.00
Electrical Power Products, Des Moines, IA	\$455,384.00

Birmingham Control Systems, Bessemer, AL

\$581,335.00

COMMENTS: The purchase of relay control switchboards are needed for the rebuild of P.O. Hoffer 69 to 15 x 25kV Substation and Cumberland Road 69 to 15 x 25kV Substation, College Lakes 69 to 15kV Substation as well as two (2) future substations. Notice of the bid was advertised through PWC's normal channels on November 6, 2023, with a bid opening date of December 1, 2023. Bids were solicited from ten (10) bidders. PWC received three (3) bids for this project. The three (3) bids received were then evaluated by the Electric Systems Support-Substations and Procurement Departments. **MWDBE/Local Participation:** Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Charlotte, NC, is not a small local business and is not classified as a MWDBE business.

- C. Approve bid recommendation to award construction for the Cross Creek Water Resource Facility and Rockfish Creek Water Resource Facility Screw Pump Improvements to T. A. Loving Company, Goldsboro, NC, the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder, in the total amount of \$19,139,750.00, and forward to City Council for approval.

The Cross Creek Water Resource Facility and Rockfish Creek Water Resource Facility Screw Pump Improvements are budgeted in 002.0160.0435.2210463-01.820090.CPR100499.

Bids were received February 8, 2024, as follows:

<u>Bidders</u>	<u>Total Base Bid</u>	<u>Alternate Bid Item #1</u>	<u>Toal Base Bid +Alternate Bid</u>
T. A. Loving Company,	\$17,013,250.00	\$2,126,500.00	\$19,139,750.00
J. Cumby Construction, Inc.	\$17,532,500.00	\$1,908,000.00	\$19,440,500.00
Crowder Construction, Inc.	\$18,183,700.00	\$1,265,500.00	\$19,449,200.00

COMMENTS: Notice of the bid was advertised through PWC's normal channels on December 11, 2023, with an original bid date of January 18, 2023, which was extended to February 8, 2024. Bids were solicited from three (3) vendors and three (3) were received. **MWDBE/SLS Participation:** T.A. Loving Company is a firm based in Goldsboro, NC that has a local office in Fayetteville, NC. T.A. Loving Company also pays Cumberland County taxes. They anticipate \$500,500.00 in Small Local Supplier (SLS) spend with a local HVAC business, Hair Plumbing & Mechanical. T.A. Loving does not anticipate any MWDBE spend.

END OF CONSENT

III. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING ELECTRIC RATES AND ELECTRIC, WATER, AND WASTEWATER FEES AND SURCHARGES

Chairman Porter opened the Public Hearing on the proposed Electric Rates and Electric, Water and Wastewater Fees and Surcharges with the relevant revisions to the Service Regulations and Charges.

He stated at our board meeting on February 14, 2024, this hearing was set for today, and PWC staff gave public notice of this hearing by publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation serving this community, the Fayetteville Observer, on Sunday, February 18, 2024, and posted the same notice information, along with all relevant documents, on our website on Thursday, February 15, 2024.

He called on staff to provide a summary of the proposed rates, fees, and surcharges.

Mr. Jason Alban, Director of Financial Planning provided a brief summary of the staff's recommendations from February 14th.

- ▶ 2% across-the-board total system revenue increases in FY25 and FY26
 - Implemented via increases to Basic Facility, Demand and/or Energy Charges
 - Rates effective May 1 of 2024 and 2025; July 1, 2024, CP rates Year 1
 - Also includes updating Area Light Rates to Cost of Service
- ▶ Additional recommendations:
 - Consolidate Small Power Service Rates effective May 1, 2024
 - Update CP Formula effective July 1, 2024 – Med and Large Power Service
 - Adjust TOU periods and make Daily effective May 1, 2025 – 4hr down to 3hr
 - Remove Coal Ash Rider effective May 1, 2025 [\$2.00/month Residential]
 - Update PWC Fees, Charges and Surcharges effective May 1, 2024

Chairman Porter opened the hearing to individuals who signed up to be heard pursuant to the terms of the Public Notice. He stated each such individual speaker shall have three (3) minutes to speak. Fifteen (15) minutes will be allowed for each side of this issue.

He reiterated individual speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes each unless by previous arrangement a single spokesperson is designated, in which case the spokesperson may use the entire 15 minutes. Time used in response to a Commission member will not be counted against the allotted 15 minutes. No one in the audience will be permitted to speak during Commission discussion and debate except in response to a question from a Commission member recognized by the Chair.

He then asked the Clerk of the Board ‘Are there any individuals wishing to be heard?’

Ms. Durant responded, there is one individual requesting to be heard. She then called Mr. Steve Harper to the podium (5707 Bashford Court, Fayetteville, NC 28304). Mr. Harper was afforded three (3) minutes to be heard.

She then informed our Chairman that the Hearing was concluded.

Chairman Porter acknowledged the written comments provided by individuals prior to the meeting. He stated the name of each person who provided written comments and a copy of their comments will be reflected in this meeting’s minutes (see Exhibit A).

Commissioner Christopher Davis motioned to approve the Electric Rates, and Electric, Water and Wastewater Fees and Surcharges, with the relevant revisions to the Service Regulations and Charges recommended by PWC Staff. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard King, and unanimously approved.

IV. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Timothy Bryant stated during this (Public Hearing) process we received more written comments and feedback relative our water and wastewater fees, rather than our electric rates which was the particular topic for this public hearing today. Because of some of the comments and questions we received concerning our water system, particularly the PFAS concerns from our constituency. Mr. Bryant shared the following statement of what PWC has done, what PWC is doing, and what we will be doing in the future.

“PWC’s top priority is providing safe, high-quality drinking water that meets or exceeds all current regulatory standards, consequently we share our communities’ concerns & frustration about PFAS contaminants.

It has been well reported that the predominant source of emerging compounds is the use of/and manufacturing of products including cosmetics, shampoos, paints, food packaging, cleaning, stain and stick resistance products, as such PFAS compounds are pervasive throughout society—on clothes, surfaces, in the air, and in water.

Prior to the EPA announcing proposed PFAS drinking water standards last year in 2023, there had been no established regulatory limits for PFAS in drinking water. However, for nearly 10 years, PWC has advocated with regulatory agencies to reduce and prevent the discharge of industrial pollution/PFAS into the Cape Fear River, our primary drinking water source. While PFAS are present in our source water, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says 70% of a consumer’s exposure to emerging compounds comes from non-drinking water sources.

PWC has shared ongoing education and provided customers testing results along with our efforts to respond to the PFAS threat. This information has been reported in our customer communications, our annual water quality report, on our website, and local media reports.

While we understand the public’s desire for swift action to remove PFAS. It is important to note that any solution to remove PFAS and other contaminants requires scientific studies, along with engineering designs specific to water sources and technology availability. Water treatment system upgrades are major infrastructure investments and there are no “off-the shelf” solutions. To determine potential solutions, PWC studied different technologies for beginning in 2021 to determine that Granular Activated Carbon media/method to be the most effective in removing PFAS in our water system.

Most recently, CityView News reported on our plan to upgrade our water treatment systems to include installing Granular Activated Carbon (G-A-C) filtration systems in response to removing PFAS as this plan was presented in an open Commission meeting on January 10, 2024.

As this Granular Activated Carbon system upgrade is being designed and built to help us meet new EPA Drinking Water standards, PWC has been actively upgrading our current water treatment systems to include Powder Activated Carbon (P-A-C) treatment processes that effectively remove modest amounts of PFAS.

The Powder Activated Carbon system construction begins this spring and is expected to be completed by April 2026. Our G-A-C upgrade is expected to be operational by February 2028.

As has been reported, upgrading our plants with the G-A-C to remove these industrial pollutants, will be a significant cost to our customers, with a projected cost of around \$80 million.

While planning for these upgrades, staff has also sought out funding to reduce the financial burden on our customers. We have just been notified that we have received more than \$30.5 million in funding for our GAC upgrades. This includes \$11.5 million in grants from federal infrastructure and state Drinking water revolving funds. \$19 million is a low interest loan from state Drinking water revolving funds.

In addition, we continue to seek other funding. We are currently working with the State NCDEQ representatives to request an additional \$18 million that includes a potential \$9.7 million toward our P-A-C facility upgrades. We will also actively continue pursuing federal and state funds for the remaining \$49.5 million needed for the G-A-C upgrade.

To recap, PWC's top priority is providing safe, high-quality drinking water and our actions show we are committed to continued advocacy to prevent PFAS from being discharged into our source water so that we can eliminate the exposure and financial burden for our customers."

Mr. Bryant stated he wanted to share this statement because there are quite a number of mis-educational opportunities in our customer base. He wants them to know what we are doing, what we have done and what we are moving towards in our processes to clean and clear PFAS from our water and the dollars we are seeking and working to secure to not shift that burden to our customers as we work for a solution.

Annual Water Changeover

Mr. Bryant stated PWC will begin our annual water changeover on March 1st. We will temporarily stop adding ammonia to our water treatment disinfection processes until April 1st. This is an annual process for all water systems that add ammonia to their drinking water, to discontinue its use for a one-month period annually, primarily to manage any potential biological growth.

V. COMMISSIONER/LIAISON COMMENTS

City Council Liaison Derrick Thompson

Council Liaison Thompson stated he is thankful the information is going out to the citizens. He is glad to see the responses on Facebook and/or Nextdoor to answer those questions to stamp out any ambiguities on what will happen come May. He stated communication is the key. As long as we can keep our citizens informed, we will not receive the backlash of what we are trying to do, and to give them the best water possible.

Council Member Davis who was also in attendance, stated he agrees with Council Member Thompson, communication is key. He likes the fact that we are getting out to the residents.

Commissioner Richard King

No Comments

Commissioner Christopher Davis

No Comments

Commissioner Ronna Rowe Garrett

Commissioner Garrett stated her comments are parallel to our CEO's. We received a lot of comments, and that is good. She also thanked Mr. Harper for coming today and we value what he said as well as the time he spent on our Community Advisory Group to understand what happens at PWC.

She noticed in a lot of the comments there was a common theme on a couple of things, and perhaps we can relate. There are a lot of folks on fixed incomes who have concerns on any rates and anything. So, she acknowledges those remarks.

She stated there also seem to be a lot of comments from people who do not understand or who were misinformed. Comments like ‘worst water in the state;’ ‘you need to focus on more serious things like PFAS.’ Which leads her to believe that this person or maybe people do not understand that it is not one or the other: a hike or no hike; focus on PFAS or do not focus on PFAS. Certainly, the Commission is focused on PFAS and has been focused on PFAS. She stated the Commissioners take great pride in really understanding the issues and really focusing on the citizens and their concerns before we can make any policy decisions or fiduciary decisions, and they are not taken lightly. This rate is not as high as other rate hikes have been in the past or with other utilities. Even though it is not as high as others we still do not take it lightly when we make these decisions.

She felt it important to acknowledge the comments and the concerns but also to know that they (the Commissioners) educate themselves and listen because that is part of their fiduciary responsibility, and they genuinely care about the community and their concerns.

March 8th is International Women’s Day. Everyone in here has a woman in your life. So be aware the focus is on the women’s right movement and gender equality, and we celebrate internationally, International Women’s Day.

Commissioner Donald Porter

Commissioner Porter thanked everyone for all the great work and all you do. He also thanked the families who sacrifice for them to be here.

VI. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

The Commission acknowledges receipt of the following reports and information.

- A. Monthly Cash Flow Report - January 2024
- B. Recap of Uncollectible Accounts – January 2024
- C. Financial Statement Recaps – January 2024
 - Electric Systems
 - Water/Wastewater
- D. Career Opportunities
- E. Actions by City Council during the meeting of February 12, 2024, related to PWC:
 - Approved - Third Amendment to Lease of Suite 102 of R. C. Williams Building
 - Approved - Sole Source Recommendation - Purchase and Installation of Cla-Val Pump
 - Approved - Bid Recommendation - Readvertisement of Design-Build Services – Line 54-Inch Outfall Research Drive to I-95 Project

VII. CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES 143-318.11(A)(3) FOR LEGAL MATTERS

Commissioner Christopher Davis motioned to enter Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11(A)(3) for Legal Matters. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Ronna Rowe Garrett and unanimously approved at 8:58 a.m.

There being no more discussion, upon motion by Commission Ronna Rowe Garrett, seconded by Commissioner Richard King, and unanimously approved, the Commission returned to open session at 9:17 a.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, upon motion by Commissioner Ronna Rowe Garrett, seconded by Commissioner Richard King, and unanimously approved, the Commission adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

EXHIBIT A

Public Hearing Written Comments February 28, 2024

(Comments received by 5pm Friday, February 23, 2024)

Melissa Reid

Good afternoon PWC board,

I have been a resident of Fayetteville my entire life and I am appreciative of everything PWC does for our community.

I am aware of the increase in rates and I admit I don't want to pay more (and who does) but I also understand that everything has gone up in price. If you were doubling the cost, I would be up in arms but this small amount wouldn't even be the cost of one coffee from Starbucks on the month with my highest usage.

Thank you again for always supporting our community.

Pat Mingle,

AS a PWC customer for the more than 50 years we have lived in Fayetteville, we have no complaints about the rates or the service. PWC has one of the lowest rates in the state. The service is outstanding

- continually going above and beyond to provide excellent customer service. Just like everything else, the cost of providing this service has gone up. I believe PWC very carefully reviews all the elements of this service in their ongoing effort to keep the rates as low as possible and provide the reliable service we take for granted every day.

Fayetteville's Mayor Colvin was very complimentary of PWC on the radio this morning - talking about how well run the company is.

Mary Anne Brooks

I have been a PWC customer for over 20 years. The cost of every single thing I buy from goods to services has had some sort of increase over the last four years. The increases proposed by PWC are very reasonable considering the costs of maintenance and upgrades to keep our power grid in tip top shape. We had a transformer blow on my block yesterday. When I called to report it, I spoke to a real live person who was so helpful. It was fixed promptly and professionally plus my phone number was updated and I'm now going to receive an electronic bill. Nobody likes to pay more but sometimes it's just necessary. Fayetteville is so lucky to have a public utility! Please keep it that way.

Thank you,

Cindy Hamilton

Hello,

Please do not raise our rates. It's ridiculous when my water bill is \$1.50 with \$50 service fee.

People need to get together and file a lawsuit against PWC. I see that happening in the near future, there's already talk among the citizens

DO NOT RAISE CURRENT RATES!

Elizabeth Varnedoe

I am a long time resident of Cumberland County, and I've always used PWC. I have no problem with the rate increase. Our streets are clear of limbs, and if there is a power outage for any reason at all, I am notified. I can drink the water because of PWC, and in fact, my bill has gone down this past year. So if pwc needs an increase to help keep this city clean and running, and to give their employees a fair wage, I'm all for it. My goodness, prices are going up everywhere, and it is no surprise because they posed increase months ago. Please reach out if I can help. Thank you and good luck.

Brian Gaskell

I am responding to a proposed increase in PWC electric rates that that will be considered on 2/28/2024. Even though no customer ever wants to hear of a price increase, I am a firm believer that this would be money well spent. During my nearly 14 years as a PWC Water/Sewer/Electric Customer, I have had nothing but extreme appreciation for PWC. Their superior customer service, above average reliability of services, and the fact that PWC is well-invested/represented in the community speaks volumes. In addition, even with this rate increase, I believe that PWC's rates will still be lower or still in line with many of the surrounding utility providers. I realize and appreciate that this comes after PWC lowered electric rates a few years ago. In addition, I understand that PWC will be dropping the Power Supply Adjustment charge, and the Coal Ash rider charges. PWC can only absorb so many cost increases, specifically when the energy costs from Duke, it's main power supplier, continues to increase. I am in firm agreement with PWC's philosophy of smaller, more frequent rate evaluation/changes as opposed to larger, less frequent increases. I believe that this request is in line with that philosophy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

LaVar Wright

Greetings! I find it hard to believe that so many people are outraged about incremental increases in the cost of public services such as Power, Water and Sewer! Everything we consume has increased over the years! Public and Private! Is anyone opening complaining about the cost of fuel? Homes? A Taco? If you know anything about our Public Utility, you know they are here for us! The citizens! PWC provides a service unlike any in the country because they actually care! No Way Big Oil would dare send out literature outlining ways to save! Who offers programs and devices to help control your usage? Who allowed their rate payers to skate just a little bit when the world was experiencing a Pandemic? PWC! Our Hometown Utility! If it cost any company more to operate, to stay alive and ahead of future issues, they have to share the burden! These private companies like Big Oil and The Automobile Industry stuck us all with high prices because there was a shortage! The cost to do business didn't increase! They just took advantage of your spending! PWC has taken care of the city and surrounding areas for decades! Their is one group that benefits from its existence and business model! The rate payers! Thank you PWC for taking care of me and mine for over 30 years!

Sharon Moyer

While I wish rates weren't going up, I understand why it's necessary. There is no way around it if the supplier is raising rates. I recently compared our PWC rates and fees to my daughter's in Charlotte and my families in Michigan. PWC's rates and fees are far better than the privately owned utilities in my comparison.

Personally, I'm grateful we have a public utility. I know they are not beholden to share holders who care about profits over reliable service.

I rest easy at night knowing that MY hometown utility has state of the art equipment and plans in place to shift power if a squirrel or some other creature takes out the line.

And a big thanks to all the brave folks who get up in those bucket trucks to fix the lines when a creature or Mother Nature takes them down.

Latham Hodges

No one wants a rate increase but the fact is that everything is going up in price. A small increase should be expected due to these rising costs.

All basic services and supplies have gone up in price. The cost of food, gas and many other everyday needed

items have gone up.

If you have gone to your favorite fast food restaurant you are very aware of this fact.
When you go to the gas station to fill up your car, you are very aware of this fact.

No one wants a rate increase but we want the products supplied and we want them on a timely matter.
I believe and hope the increased revenue will be used to continue to provide the quality products and services we have come to expect from OUR PWC.

Scott Keen

I am writing today to support PWC and to offer my understanding of necessary rate increases... with a caveat. The purposes for which you indicated the necessary rate increase are all viable purposes and the public should realize that infrastructure investment is critical to continue enjoying our freedoms. I write this as one way too tired of fiscal waste in public and government services, so while increases are not ideal, I do realize that some reinvestment is necessary. I would encourage PWC to continue to approach business decisions like this one as transparently and as economically sound as possible. As we the public acknowledges, grudgingly, the necessities of rate increases, we do require that our institutions operate in a financially sound manner. We accept economic conditions and what they necessitate, but do not violate our trust. Thank you for the community you help provide for us here in Fayetteville and may the slight increase be put to efficient use.

Meredith Stiehl

My involvement with FayPWC has been as a commercial and residential customer. I also had the opportunity to serve on their Community Advisory Group. I was educated on the many variables that control rate adjustments. The quality services that we enjoy comes from a commitment to improvement and maintenance in a changing environment. In many other industries, we accept the cost of doing business rises. Our public utility company is no different. They cannot provide excellence without addressing multiple needs. My hope is that their services can continue to strive for excellence. Attend the public hearing in this spirit. We all want quality services.

Pat Wright

PWC is raising our rates for electric?? That seems immensely fair. We will still be at a lower cost than any of the utilities in the area. We cannot expect PWC to absorb the rising costs of electricity without passing it on. Plus additional costs to protect our portion of the grid. I say thank you PWC for keeping our rates low, even with this increase.

Jean Moore

While no one wants to incur a rate increase, we must understand that the cost of everything fluctuates. Energy costs are increasing and many utilities are having to increase rates. PWC is very responsible about adjusting their rates to reflect their actual costs. Ours is not the only electric utility in the region that has had to increase rates recently. I am proud that PWC also decreases our rates when they are able. I hope everyone remembers that their costs include fair pay for their employees, including the linemen who literally keep our lights on after a weather incident that affects the power grids.

Amanda Klinck

I understand the need for price increases due to inflation. I am supporting this on the basis of environmental upgrades and responsible security of our infrastructure. This includes continued investment in solar energy and reduction in potential coal ash disasters

Anna Smith

We are lucky to have a locally owned utility company such as PWC. They are extremely responsive, offer competitive rates and are pro-active to keep our services working efficiently and to prevent costly issues. As a PWC customer for the more than 50 years, we have no complaints about the rates or the service. PWC has one of the lowest rates in the state.

The service is outstanding - continually going above and beyond to provide excellent customer service. They provide their customers with education and incentive programs to help keep rates low. Just like everything else, the cost of providing this service has gone up. But even with this rate increase PWC still offers lower rates than other electric providers. I believe PWC very carefully reviews all the elements of this service in their ongoing effort to keep the rates as low as possible and provide the reliable service we take for granted every day. Fayetteville's

Mayor Colvin was very complimentary of PWC on the radio this morning - talking about how well run the company is.

Lameka Johnson

Please don't raise our rates. I can barely afford it now. I used to work out of town for months at a time and the basic fees for my home were about \$135. So imagine me actually being home now?? I don't cut on my heat and suffer every winter for last 15 years, staying sick to keep my bill under \$200. I live alone, barely cook and use my fireplace but nothing helps. Please don't make me keep choosing food and medicine over a utility bill.

ERIC FLORES

I'M NOT SUPPORT THE IDEA OF HAVING A RATE HIGHER, INFLATION I HIGH ENOUGH AND WE THE PEOPLE CAN'T AFFORD ANY OTHER INCREASES IN EVERY DAY UTILITIES SUCH AS WATER, SEWER AND ELECTRIC SERVICES.

James Potter

As a new resident who recently purchased a home in Fayetteville I feel like I'm already paying more than enough for electric. My electric bill has been over 200-250\$ a month without including the other utilities. it is not a big house, 3 bed rooms. Lights off and ac unit turned down low, and the prices are still steep. I'd prefer not to imagine an even steeper cost seeing as you've already got extra charges for specific hours in the day already. With the cost of living here making most jobs low pay in your market area I don't understand how your utilities are as expensive as they are. Firmly against any hikes. Honestly you guys should look into more proficiency on your end, and find your consumers more price reductions.

We already pay fees just to be connected to your grid for every single utility. So again you're making extra money just to have a house connected stop pretending you need to drain more from everyone already paying.

Leah Garcia

It's not fair that those living in Hope Mills have to pay outside water/sewer rates. And now you want to raise the rates!? How about at least stop charging us outside rates first! The outside rates are a deterrent for those that might want to move to this area. It makes me want to leave.

Deborah Johnson

Please don't raise the prices again. I've had to call PWC and ask them to lower my bill because I'm on a fixed income and close to 70 years old. I want to be able to stay in my home so please don't put more on us than we can financially afford. Everything is so expensive now. We need help with our bill from PWC. Not more raising the price again. Please don't raise the prices. I have to filter my water I pay you for because it's not drinkable. Please help us by doing better for us

Jenna Hicks (910) 992-1344

Over the last 3 years, our utility bill has gone from being between \$200-\$300 per month to \$350-\$450 per month with no significant change in usage. We keep our heat/AC at 69° in the winter (though occasionally keep it turned off to save on energy costs) and 72° in the summer. We should not have to freeze in our homes, time our showers, or die of heat

because we fear that we will not be able to pay our utility bill. Our sewer bill is also much higher than the water bill. We had a previous issue when trying to seed grass in our backyard, where we were charged almost \$1000 that month. We were charged both for the extra water (understandable) but double the water charge for sewage expenses even though the water was used outside. We have since then not allowed our kids to play outside with the hose/run in the sprinklers/etc because of the ridiculous price of these utilities. This company is robbing people blind and I am constantly seeing people begging for a solution on social media, as they too are struggling to afford their PWC utility bills as well.

Carolina McQueen

I don't feel the basic facility charges should be so high. Just to start with it's just short of \$70 for every household in Fayetteville, not including businesses. It's not affordable in today's economy. I understand rate hikes when it costs extra for PWC to purchase power from Duke but these facility charges need to go down.

Alecia Schilling

Please reconsider the proposed rate increase, as there are many residents like me who are on disability social security and have very little funds every month. I barely use my electric and water and my bill is still over \$100 and can reach towards \$200 when I have to use heaters or fans, I can't even afford air conditioning in the summer! Please reconsider the poverty level residents who are struggling to get by, please!

Karen Phillips

I'm a disabled senior citizen with a limited income. If my electric and water rates go any higher I will have to make some difficult choices. I already keep my thermostat set at 68 and walk around house wrapped in blanket. Don't use much water since it's just me. Shower once weekly and do laundry once every 2 weeks.

What else can I do?! Updated windows, metal roof, HVAC only a few years old. No rates raise please.

Eleanor Fortea

Not in favor of increase in rates may in be for water or electric. We are already paying too much for the facility fees. The pressure for water is very horrible.

Luis Rodriguez Lopez

Hi there,

Hard working families already struggles to cover down already high prices every month. I can personally talk about myself and situation. We do an extreme effort to not consume a lot of water and electricity. Doing this by telling our kids sometimes that if they didn't sweat a lot in a day they don't need to shower.

Wearing long pajamas or clothing while in the house during winter to not use the heating system a lot. Literally living in the dark for not turning on too many lights. Replaced all light bulbs and all appliances to high efficiency ones. These are just few. We had never in more than three years living at this address had any problems where PWC have to come and do some maintenance. Please be considerate and put yourself in our shoes! Our average monthly payments is from \$300 to \$400. Thank you.

Paul Johnson

In responding to your invitation to comment on what I have felt are pending inevitable rate increases for the water and sanitary wastewater treatment services to which my household is billed each month, I ask for what PWC has always provided in the 20 years that I have lived in this community: "Prudence and quality."

With the knowledge that costs for virtually every good and service have risen in the period following our nation's attempt to recover from the pandemic that has shaped so much of life and policy in the past two years.

I have always appreciated PWC's servitude to public service - being transparent and gradual in raising rates as you have been pressed to do to stay responsible as operators in the arena of the valuable services in which you serve. You have also been truthful and realistic in keeping those rates increases as reasonable as can be. Please continue your policy of REALISTIC PRUDENCE and UNEQUALLED QUALITY (when compared to other PUBLIC and PRIVATELY HELD UTILITIES!) That's all we as customers can expect.

Ronald Long

No fee

Christine Hovious

I am against any rate hike at this time.

Adanette Cartagena

NO TO RATE HIKES. We are already suffering the high charges on our bills lately from PWC. Is really hard to pay such high bills for a small house where only 2 people lives in. Again NO to Rate Hikes

Sincerely,

Dawn Cox

Good afternoon I am writing to ask that you not increase our fees any higher than they already are. I understand everything is going up but people like myself are already struggling to pay rent and feed our families. My bill has increased drastically over the last few months already and my family does everything it can to cut back but the bills aren't going down. Please consider listening to your clients and understand that a rate increase will continue to make our lives harder and harder.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Tamika Jones

To whom it may concern:

I see PWC is trying once again to raise rates on our services. I DO NOT oppose of this hike and strongly suggest for rates to stay the same or be lower than they are now. Due to today's economy we barely can afford the rates now. A lot of families such as myself are struggling with the high bills coming in. I do not want to struggle even more with rates being higher in the near future. Please listen our community and please NOT RAISE RATES. Thank you in advance.

Karen Tew

NO RATE HIKES until they get the poisonous PFAS out of our water supply. This corrosive water is not only destroying our bodies but my plumber tells me it is also breaking down pipes in people's homes more quickly. Why should we pay more for this horrible service?!

Donald Perkins

How can you even think of raising fees on water when the quality of PWC water is the worst in the state? Particulates in the water continually clog my water traps and filters requiring expensive plumbing charges to resolve. In addition, your water has permanent pollutants in it that have been proven to cause cancer and other diseases. Until you solve these problems, you need to leave fee increases alone. We should not

have to pay for dirty, contaminated water!

Crystal Jaimes

By voting 'no' to the proposed rate increase, we are advocating for equitable and affordable electricity for all. Let's work together to ensure that our energy costs remain fair and accessible to everyone in our community. There are more serious things to focus on like PFAS. PFAS contamination in our water poses serious health risks to our community. It's crucial that we take action to address this issue and safeguard the health and well-being of ourselves and future generations. Clean water is a fundamental right, and we must work together to protect it.

Mirta Humphreys

NO RATE HIKES until you, PWC, get rid of the poisonous PFAS from our water supply!

Summer Galicia

NO HIKES UNTIL PFAS ARE OUT OF OUR WATER!! Seriously, we can't drink our water and have to buy water AND a water bill. Do the right thing, please show your integrity, we're begging you!! Money is tight for EVERYONE, and y'all keep raising rates. It's ridiculous.

Brent Cates

I do not believe the people of Fayetteville need another rate hike. Everyone knows about the forever chemicals in the water that makes the water not safe. my family was forced into the city with the Big Bang around 2007, and it is enough to pay double on my taxes and everything else since being in the city. My mom, who I provide a place for, has a tough enough time paying for the bills, luckily she pays no rent, otherwise she would go broke. My father is a veteran, but gets no discount for that either. Our services aren't any better now than they were 20 years ago. I feel PWC gets plenty of money. Don't even make me speak about the Arran Lake Dam that looks like a bomb hit it, looks horrible and makes it tough for the Ambulance to get around, and have to go further to get out of the neighborhood.

Tanya Mckoy

NO RATE HIKES until they get the poisonous PFAS out of our water supply.

Thanks

Brandt Harris

I urge you all not to produce rate hikes... The cost of living is already making it hard enough to survive, on top of jobs that don't want to pay but have you do the most. Not to mention the PFA level in our water is too high, I believe that should be fixed before considering an increase in service.

Janet Menzak

My name is Janet Menzak. My husband Adam and I reside at 1821 Glenwick Dr in Fayetteville. (484) 767-8826. Our account is in my husband's name.

I am writing to you today to express my outrage at PWC's proposed rate hikes in May.

My primary reason for rejecting these increases is the total lack of acknowledgement or any plans in the works to address the astronomical amounts of PFAS or "forever chemicals" found in our treated water.

Fayetteville's water was recently highlighted in the article from WRAL.com titled "How safe is your tap water" In case you did not see it, PWC customers' water was tested and was found to have the highest levels of PFAS of all the North Carolina cities tested. 47ppt when 10ppt is the safe level recommended by the EPA

These chemicals cause cancer, digestive problems, and a whole host of other issues. Not to mention the damage these chemicals can cause to the water supply pipes in customer's homes and may need to be replaced at the homeowner's expense.

It is unethical that this company should suggest ANY rate hikes without a plan to immediately address the poisoned water that you are supplying to your customers. As it stands, we are already being forced to spend extra money to install home water filtration and buy bottled water.

Quite the opposite of rate hikes, PWC should be giving its customers a rate REDUCTION for sending us water we cannot safely drink.

Thank you for hearing me out. Regards,