

Diane Holt

From: trevorknudsen@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2020 9:47 PM
To: Diane Holt
Subject: Case Comment Form: Trevor Knudsen

Name: Trevor Knudsen
Case Number: MNV-W-19-01
Email: trevorknudsen@gmail.com
Telephone:
Address:
Rigby Idaho, 83442

Name of Utility Company: Morning View Water Company
Comment: Idaho Public Utilities Commission PO Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to case number MNV-W-19-01, Morning View Water Company's case to increase rates and charges. While I feel Morning View Water Company (hereafter, MVWC) does a great job of making sure the residents of the neighborhood have adequate and clean water, I am hesitant to support an increased rate. There are a number of reasons that I hesitate to support this, outlined as follows:

1. The notice sent to customers indicates a 17% increase. It is unclear if this is to be an increase in the base rate, the tiered metered rate, or both. I feel this deserves some clarification for the customers so they can plan future finances accordingly.
2. While nominal increases in utility charges are to be expected over time, a 17% increase in a single year is a drastic increase that could have large implications for residents who may already be struggling to make ends meet or are on a fixed income.
3. The current rates are significantly higher than what other residents I have spoken to in the area pay. Additionally, a 2017 survey of utilities showed that smaller cities (<1,000 residents) paid the highest water bill, at an average of \$33/month whereas the current base rate for MVWC is \$64/month. A 17% increase would take the base rate from \$64/month to nearly \$75/month, which is nearly 2.25 times higher than the average monthly rate indicated by the survey for small cities. The survey is based on city utilities whereas MVWC is a water company, but it shows the current disparity between what the current rates are versus what is typically paid in the state. I am curious what the rates charged by MVWC are a function of, and why they are so much higher than rates paid statewide?
4. The notice indicates that water usage has decreased with metered rates. If water usage has in fact gone down with metered rates, it would seem logical that with increased rates, water usage would decrease even further. It is obvious that many residents do not irrigate their lawns during the summer, largely due to the cost of water. Some estimates indicate that a green lawn may add between 5-15% of value to a home. Higher water costs and lower water usage translates to devalued homes and an unsightly neighborhood.
5. Has the economic feasibility of a rate decrease been considered? If a rate decrease were implemented, it could encourage more water use, thus maintaining adequate revenue to test, maintain, and repair the water system, while simultaneously making it more feasible for residents to maintain a green landscape and beautify the neighborhood.
6. As this water company is considered a "small" water company, is there any way that the Idaho Public Utilities Commission could decrease the charges on this company, which would benefit both the company and residents in the neighborhood?

I am grateful to the owners of MVWC for their dedication of providing our neighborhood with adequate clean water. However, I feel that more options could be explored prior to or instead of increasing rates. If measures have been taken to explore other options, it would be beneficial for those measures to be made known to the residents of the neighborhood. Until more options are explored I have difficulty supporting this increase. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Trevor Knudsen
182 N. 3978 E
Rigby, ID 83442

Unique Identifier: 164.165.206.42