

Bonny Davis, Springfield Township (MontCo) Treasurer and Tax Collector January 2009 through December 2021 (13 years), and 7 Years as the President of the Montgomery County Tax Collectors Association.

I became the Springfield Township Tax Collector in January 2009. At that time the Sewer Rental Fee was included on the County/Township Tax bill, along with the Township's Refuse fee and the County's Waste Fee.

The Sewer Rental fee was based on the water usage from the previous year. So, in January of each year, I would receive the water usage information for the previous year for each property from Aqua PA and PSW. I then took 80% of that usage and multiplied it by the rate for the current year, which the Board of Commissioners had voted on in December of the previous year. Why only bill 80% of the water usage? Well, I'm glad you asked. It was assumed that 20% of the water was used for cooking, drinking, watering your indoor plants or outdoor flowers, washing your car, filling a baby pool or watering your grass. None of that water goes into the sewer and so why should the residents have to pay to process that 20%? Well, guess what? BCWSA bills us on 100% of the water usage. This is something that was never brought up in front of the public in the 3 years of presentations at Board meetings and/or special meetings. Maybe the Commissioners knew, but if they did, they kept it to themselves.

The other advantage of me personally calculating the fee for each property and adding it to each individual bill, is that by being hands on, I could see if a property had an unusually high water usage in one quarter and/or compared to other years. It might be something as simple as having their children home from college in the summer or having a swimming pool to fill, but if there was a huge increase from one year to the next, I would contact the property owner and suggest that they contact a plumber to see if they had a leak or maybe a faucet that's dripping, etc. Sometimes, they would admit that they left a hose running all night or something like that. However, more often the response would come a few weeks later after they had called a plumber and had the problem fixed. There was only once that someone told me to mind my own business. They had a \$3000 sewer rental bill and to this day I have no idea why their water usage was so high. Anyhow, my point is that I was hands on, I helped the property owners, and if there was an issue that was unusual, we often went to the Township Manager and asked him if we could knock a few

dollars off of the bill. He would usually work with us and understood that this was a one time credit. So, do you think BCWSA or Aqua or Essential Utilities would do any of the above? My guess is no. Actually. That's not even a guess.

There was another item added to every bill and that is a flat service fee, which is basically for having a water meter. This was something I had mentioned to the Commissioners that could be done on our current bills, if they needed to get more revenue from the sewer rental bills. Other Municipalities do this, and I knew that. It could be \$10 for residential meters and \$15 for commercial meters, for example. No, the Board did not like this idea. But guess what? BCWSA does. My current bill shows that fee is \$26.50. My water usage is \$19.02. Therefore, my last bill was \$45.52. The current rate is \$0.006. I used 2900 gallons of water and if each month this year is the same, I will have paid \$546.24. When the sewer rental was billed with the tax bill, my sewer rental fee was \$127.66 in 2015 (based on 2014 water usage). That is an **increase of OVER 425%**.

The first year BCSWA increased their rate I paid \$418.55, which 425% increase. It went from an average of \$11.00 a month (\$9.67 a month to a \$35-\$40 monthly fee.

Another difference between a private company and the municipality billing is that when the sewer rental fee was on the tax bill, the property owner could pay 2% less, if they paid by a certain date. On the other hand, if they paid later in the year, they would pay 10% more. The private company offers no discount, and they will add a late fee each month if the bill is not paid just one day late.

The tax bill was often paid by the property owner's mortgage company using the funds in their escrow account. So, not only were their bills rarely paid late but almost always had a discount. Now, the property owners are billed monthly and must pay the bill themselves, with no discount and the possibility of a late fee each month. At the beginning of the transition,

I could go on but I'm sure you are all getting the idea. Keep your sewer system.

Thank you for your time!

Bonn S. Davis