

Dear Council Members and City Staff,

I am writing in regard to City water and water systems in relationship to water sales, available water for fighting fires, and transparency regarding the water and sewer enterprise funds.

First, as Council considers merging with Goldridge, what is the status of Sebastopol's water system in regard to fire fighting. Who uses our water? Where is the water stored? Do we have enough pressure? How are our hydrants? Do we always retain enough water so that if a fire breaks out within City Limits, there is enough water to fight the fire? How often are all these systems tested and are they okay?

These questions are top of mind given Sonoma County's history with wildfires and the recent fires in Los Angeles where pressure was lost and hydrants went dry in the middle of a huge and tragic fire.

Second, I continue to see commercial water trucks driving down Morris Street. How much is made each month selling Sebastopol's water? Does it make sense to sell our water? Is the price high enough so that resident rate payers are seeing a profit that leads to improvement of our water system? Can the City Staff please include water sales as part of a regular presentation on the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds?

Third, can the City Staff please present ledger sheets, capital improvement plans and accounting for the Water and Sewer enterprise funds on a quarterly basis? As ratepayers saw dramatic rate increases, it is crucial that there is more transparency regarding the Water and Sewer Enterprise funds and the condition of the water and sewer infrastructure.

Fourth, when can the City re-evaluate the water rates and "right size" them to reflect the fact that Sebastopol has plenty of water and needs to upgrade its infrastructure. When can the City explore lower rate rates with an annual infrastructure fee so that citizens can freely water their gardens and do their family laundry without financial worry? Our current rates encourage unnecessary conservation; we are not in a drought and have a huge aquifer. We need rates that encourage water usage and providing money for infrastructure upgrades. This could be accomplished with an annual infrastructure fee.

Thank you,
Kate Haug