

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING  
MAY 23, 2019

The Town Council convened for a workshop meeting at 7:35 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center at 201 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. In attendance Councilors Austin, Cheek, Lakin, Hunter, Mayor Pro Tem Johnson and Mayor Clark. Councilor Meyer was absent.

Town Clerk's Notice of Workshop to discuss water rates dated May 9, 2019.

Town Manager Jen Coates presented a memorandum dated 5-1-19 entitled water rate and allocation update containing background; 2018 and 2019 timeline and public meeting process; 2019 update; memorandum dated 7-24-18 presenting water rate analysis and memo dated 8-3-18 addressing water rates, base and excess water allocation ordinance in follow up to the 7-25-18 workshop discussion. Manager Coates noted the analysis to determine costs to produce water was based on budgeted expenditures and was \$10 per 1000 gallons in 2017; estimated in 2018 at \$9.98 and projected to be \$14.77 in 2019.

**SPEAKING FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

Business owner Jeremiah Tilton noted his monthly water bill had a "350% increase" and stated he would "like to understand the increase".

Retired CPA Bob Collins questioned the new fees, stating the increase "doesn't need to go up this dramatic to cover capital outlay", and noted the increase "should be shared equally among all your taps".

Business owner Kari Girard asked the Council to "put commercial rates back to where they were in 2018" until "the issue is resolved".

Business owner Tammy Tuttle expressed concerns with costs to operate a business in Town, and stated "it is more expensive to do a business here" than in the adjacent resort community. She stated "this needs to be fair and equitable", "we need to figure this out".

Charles Mueller representing the Ridgway Fire Department spoke in support of maintaining the "same" rate, noting conservation measures can be undertaken by residential users but it is "hard for business owners to conserve water".

There were questions from the Council and discussions with members of the audience.

Commercial property owner Barthold Lichtenbelt suggested researching a way to eliminate the increase for excess usage.

Business owner Adam Dubroff reported he spoke to Tri-County Water and the "rate is \$5.40". He questioned using Tri-County to supply water instead of having a municipal system.

Paul Choates noted business owners "just want to see fairness".

Susie Ulrich suggested the Town “look at the specifics of the building” as some commercial buildings include residential uses and provide “public restrooms”.

Jeremiah Tilton suggested researching the national average restaurants pay for water.

Business owner Jack Young suggested the Town “assess where costs are coming from” and “how quickly the amortization on debt occurs”. From there determine the “cost to produce water” and establish a “rate structure”.

There was discussion between the Council. Staff was directed to look at impacts to the existing budget if commercial water rates are reduced for the remainder of the year to \$10.42 per 1000 gallons, with no tiered charges for excess use. It was agreed to call another meeting to discuss an amendment to the existing ordinance and implementing a \$10.42 flat rate fee for commercial water users, for a time frame to be determined at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC  
Town Clerk