



GREATER CHARLOTTETOWN AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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December 18, 2019

Dear Mayor Brown;

Thank you and your officials for taking the time to meet last week to continue discussions regarding the City of Charlottetown's 2019 water and sewer rate increases.

As we have shared with you in previous meetings, several of our members have expressed concerns regarding the severity of the most recent City of Charlottetown water and sewer utility rate increases. This past summer, members saw their bills go up anywhere from 25-60%. In certain instances, the increase occurred despite a reduction in their water consumption. They also shared that the lack of notice of the rate change had a negative impact on their business operations.

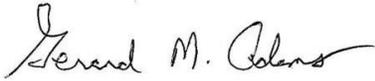
We acknowledge the importance of adequately funding a utility as vital as water and sewer. We understand that this was the first increase since 2012, and over this time, the utility was not adequately funded. We hope that you would realize and agree with the challenges in attempting to fix seven years of mismanagement in just one City budget cycle. For businesses to factor budget adjustments into their own annual planning cycles, rate changes need to be predictable, manageable and responsible. An underpublicized increase of upwards of 60%, without any changes the previous seven years, is anything but this.

It is for this reason, that as a follow up to our latest meeting, we request further information and clarification for the following items:

- Access to the meeting minutes and records of the Water and Sewer Utility Committee for the last three years when rate changes were discussed, and decisions made to recommend increase or not.
- The financial planning that has been done to ensure Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber members that a long-term sustainable plan exists and increases of this nature do not continue to happen.
- Clear indications of how the City will be more open, transparent and provide notice of changes in the water and sewer utility rates going forward.
- Given that the City has consolidated financial statements, can you provide us with the policy statement, legislation or other authority upon which the principle of disallowing the City's financial surplus to be used to any degree to mitigate the water and sewer utility rates?
- What percentage of City of Charlottetown taxpayers are water and sewer utility ratepayers?

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us to discuss these concerns on behalf of our 1000 members. As mentioned in the meeting, we hope to continue the conversation on how we can ensure future rate changes are predictable, manageable and responsible. We look forward to your response and being able to share what we've learned with Chamber members.

Sincerely,



Gerard Adams
Interim CEO



Dawn Binns
Board of Directors 2019-20 President

CC: Mark Lanigan, Manager of Finance; Richard MacEwen, Manager of Water and Sewer Utility; Stephen Wedlock, Controller; Deputy Mayor and Water and Sewer Utility Committee Chair, Jason Coady; Ronnie McPhee, Community Liaison Officer

