

June 22, 2023

Re: Confluence Rivers rate increase for Majestic Lakes Subdivision

To Whom It May Concern:

I have received the notice that, once again, Confluence Rivers is requesting to raise our sewer rate, although they're being nice enough to lower the water rate. Since Confluence Rivers took over our water and sewer service, this is the second rate increase they've requested. Meanwhile, the subdivision is growing which should mean more households to carry the expenses. If there are more houses in the subdivision, why would the increase be requested?

When Confluence first purchased in Majestic Lakes subdivision, there were 58 homes. Currently, there are approximately 200 homes. If the average water bill is \$142 per month, Confluence is billing \$28,400 per month or \$340,800 per year. The \$142 is an estimate as I know some neighbors are paying higher bills with their metered water. As the subdivision is still growing, this amount will only increase with more homes being built. At 300 homes, the amount billed is \$42,600 and \$511,200 per year. I fully expect that, by the end of 2024, there will be more than 300 homes in this subdivision.

Since Confluence has taken over, our water pressure has decreased significantly. Not to mention that the subdivision has had three boil orders since October – October 21st through the 28th, January 9th through the 16th and February 27th through March 2nd.

Boil orders that the residents aren't notified about in a timely fashion – if at all. There might be signs at the front of the subdivision but, for those who work from home, there's no reason to leave the subdivision so the signs aren't seen. An email might be sent but if someone doesn't check their email during the day, the notice won't be seen. Plus, all the email does is point you to the Confluence Rivers web page where one is supposed to figure out what you're to be looking for. Basically, if it wasn't for someone on the subdivision group mentioning it on the FB page, some residents would never know about the boil order. One would imagine that, for the money being paid for our services, a phone call would be nice.

I've checked with other residents and, even though each boil order lasted approximately a week, there was never a credit to our water accounts. As a matter of fact, for the residents with pets and/or small children, our costs increased because we had to purchase bottled water for our pets and/or children to drink until we had sufficient water boiled for them. Not only did we pay to purchase bottled water, but we also still had our normal water bill to pay.

Late in August of 2022, contractors for Confluence Rivers came to our house to put in the new meter for the water. As you can see by the attached email, I reached out to Confluence immediately after the digging as the property was NOT put back the way it was required and, in fact, was left as a mess. The yard was completely dug up, uneven and there were dirt clots surrounding the meter. To this day, the ground is still uneven and I'm not sure grass will grow there again. As the email shows, the employees of Confluence didn't care. Not only did the property NOT get repaired, but we also still received a bill for that month.

Let's also remember that this country is trying to recover from a recession. While most people are working, the price of groceries and gas for vehicles has changed radically in the last several years. Most are still living paycheck to paycheck while trying to determine what groceries they can afford to buy this week and can the family car be fueled also.

The Consumer Price Index shows that from January of 2022 through January of 2023, prices rose 6.4 percent. The average price of gas in 2020 was \$2.19 per gallon. I put gas in my tank a few days ago at \$3.09 per gallon and it's currently \$3.20 per gallon. Even with a 10-gallon tank, that's \$32.00 per week and \$128 per month – almost as much as the current water bill if you aren't metered! Of course, that's if the price of gas stays the same during the month which it does not.

According to Indeed, the expected Cost of Living Allowance for 2023 is 8.7% but, obviously, no company is going to give their employees a raise of that amount. The average raise per company is 3-5% annually. This raise obviously does not keep up with inflation.

At a new cost of \$165 per month, our water/sewer bill would officially be higher than the monthly bill for both our gas and electric bills. I would request an explanation of why our water/sewer bill exceeds both my electric and gas bill and where are the funds from our subdivision going that Confluence cannot manage on \$300,000 per year for our system.

In short, we pay far too much money for our water and sewer and receive terrible service and terrible customer service. Approving this rate increase will reinforce to Confluence that how they treat their customers doesn't matter.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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