

# Your sewer fee is a scam!

By Dr Bill Ullery: **Part 4 of 5 in a series.**

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## **Why politicians avoid the word "tax"**

If it were up to politicians, few things would ever be called "taxes." The reason is simple...loose definitions such as "fees" deprives taxpayers normal avenues of corrective action. Yes, Havasu's sewer system is a government program. And yes, taxes like death are unavoidable...you must pay.

Because American dislike of taxes is so deeply rooted in our nation's politics, lawmakers often seek to raise revenue in ways to avoid the "tax hiker" label even if it requires calling an obvious tax a "fee." That's what's happening here.

These shell games undermine transparency by making it harder for citizens to understand the true cost of government. More importantly, the politicians can delegate the setting of fees to their bureaucrats.

## **Who has the power to set fees in Havasu?**

Check the city website for code: §3.20.030. *A. The City Manager is hereby authorized to adjust fees and charges by operating policies and procedures to implement the policies for percentage recovery of defined reasonable costs to provide the regulations, products or services outlined in §3.20.040.*

The city manager can and will raise your sewer fees!

## **What rights do you have as a voter to cause a change in fees?**

None! You can't stop it! You can't change it! You can't vote on it! For example, about a month ago, the city refused to accept my two voter initiative petitions for verification of signatures and refused to put the two measures on the November 2014 ballot. Both were aimed at stopping the impending 6.2% sewer fee increase in FY 2014 as reported by Fitch Ratings.

## **Do we have options?**

You betcha! You can vote out the bums or start a recall. (I got that from a Sara Palin speech.) But, I also have a quarter century history here in Mohave County with attorneys and lawsuits in pressing local government on issues of corruption, malfeasance, and stupid stuff in general.

And yes, I think, "do nothing" is a terrible city management strategy. And yes, I intend to "do something." And that includes flushing the hated system of monthly sewer fees tied to water usage.

This is crazy...the hottest city in the country in the middle of the desert and the city wants to keep sewer rates tied to water usage? And, they like it to a point of thinking a 6.2% rate increase is justified?

And there's more crazy stuff...like Nexsen wants to refinance your current 20-year 2% interest bonds to 40-year 3% bonds. Which will add over \$60 million in interest to your sewer debt load! In your lifetime, you will never be free of this sewer debt. Why not do everything possible to pay off the debt five years early?

Is this getting political? Nah...it's just Dr Bill being Bill. But, I must admit, I'm thinking about doing some really patriotic stuff...like getting political!

I need help with a "stop the sewer fee increase" campaign. To volunteer, please contact me: Email [dbu@dbuhomes.com](mailto:dbu@dbuhomes.com) Cell 928.716.3014

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