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Florida Public Service Commission  
Office of Commission Clerk  
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

**RE: Docket No.: 20190071-WS**

RECEIVED-FPSC  
2020 JAN 15 AM 8:19  
COMMISSION  
CLERK

Dear Commissioners:

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, Deer Creek RV Golf & Country Club, Inc. held a meeting to announce an increase in their water / wastewater rates. Deer Creek RV Golf & Country Club services approximately 750 residential customers and 40 general service customers in Polk County. I recently attended a meeting in regards to this water/wastewater rate hike for Deer Creek RV Golf & Country Club, Inc., which was held at Fawn Ridge on January 4, 2020.

In the Rate Case Overview that was distributed at this meeting, the utility's monthly water and wastewater bill for a residential customer using 2,000 gallons is \$8.31 and \$22.50 respectively. Deer Creek is recommending the rates be increased to \$30.44 and \$32.31, respectively. If I have figured this increase correctly, this would amount to greater than 300%.

Deer Creek was granted certification as a utility in November 2017. Fawn Ridge, where I am an owner, was notified that beginning in 2018, Deer Creek would become our utility.

The Florida Public Services Commission (FPSC), per their mission statement, is "to facilitate the efficient provision of safe and reliable utility services at fair prices.

When a business is granted a certificate by the FPSC who is the overseer to make sure that the business requesting the certificate is qualified, or the employee(s) of the business are qualified to run this utility? How does a utility lose over \$200,000 in one year? And most importantly, why is it the responsibility of the residents to help this utility recoup these huge losses. As a customer, I am wondering what changed. If a Utility was running in the black on the takeover date in November 2017; how did it lose \$200,000 by end of year 2018?

As I am reading the attachments to the docket, I found that the utility somehow is missing 30% or more of their water? Again, senior citizens are supposed to pay for this?

In his application for a Staff Assisted Rate Case, dated March 19, 2019, Mike Caruso stated that the utility has never had a rate increase – what he didn't mention is that he's only had the utility for one year! And then to request a 300% increase? It appears to me that due diligence was not done. Should he have not done his due diligence before taking on this utility? Again, are senior citizens supposed to pay for mistakes, poor management, or lack of due diligence?

Deer Creek RV Golf & Country Club, and the parks that make up the residential piece of the utility, are comprised of 55 and older people. People are retired, on disability, veterans, almost all on a fixed income. People who have worked their whole life to be able to live in Florida or winter in Florida AFFORDABLY. That is why we bought into the development, because we could afford it. Raising our rates 300% will certainly be a huge financial hardship for most of us. Raising the rates 10% would be difficult enough.

I agree that the utility should be able to make a fair return on their investment, and I understand that you provide the process that makes this happen. I would also think that there would be someone at the FPSC who oversees business practices of utilities to make sure it never gets to the point that Deer Creek is supposedly at right now. Again, I can't quite understand how you can be missing more than 30% of the water you take in from Polk County, and be \$200,000 in the red – in a year – and then expect a senior citizen to foot the bill and get you solvent. I would appreciate a detailed explanation to this question, as I'm not sure that we won't have to revisit this again in the not too distant future.

Respectfully,



Gregory Sikora