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Milltown council may raise water rates 45%

BY KATHY CHANG

MILLTOWN — Water and sewer rates for residents and businesses may be increased by as much as 45 percent.

The Borough Council is scheduled to vote Monday on the adoption of an ordinance implementing the rate hike. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at Borough Hall.

"We don't want to see this happen," said Councilwoman Stacey Waters, chairwoman of the council's Finance, Planning and Administration Committee. However, she said, revenue is down by approximately \$160,000, and expenses are up by roughly \$350,000.

"We have to make up \$500,000 to balance the budget, [and] raising the water and sewer rates by 45 percent will do that," she said.

The proposal would increase the quarterly water and sewer bill by \$74 on a home assessed at the borough average of \$166,000. The current quarterly bill is \$165 on the average home, Waters said.

Milltown purchases its water and sewer services from the city of New Brunswick.

Waters said the council and borough administration are continuing to evaluate ways and alternatives on how they can make up the debt by not raising the rates as much.

"It's unfortunate that we had to introduce raising the rates, but we have to balance the budget," she said. "It's hard to find a way to raise revenue with water without raising the rates."