



Township of Belleville

Office of the Mayor
Michael A. Melham

Dear Belleville Water Purchaser:

Since taking office in July, 2018, the Council and I have steadily been working to cure some of the long term problems that have plagued Belleville. I'm happy to report that collectively, we have made a lot of progress. Some of that progress has included hiring a full-time CFO, which we haven't had for years, and for the first time in decades, a full-time, outside, professional Township Manager. Some may think these two positions would be staples in a Township the size of Belleville, but for many years, they were not. Because of our decisions the Township now has a professional team 'watching the store.'

Which leads me to this quarter's Water Bill. Recently the Township Council voted to increase water fees. Why? Because as you may or may not know, Belleville has a contract to purchase water from the City of Newark. That contract, which has been expired since 2015 gradually ticks up the rate the City of Newark charges Belleville. The problem was, Belleville, had not changed our water fees since 2012, which left our Water Utility running a deficit year after year. Clearly a private business buying a product for X and reselling would never be sustainable if and when the cost to purchase the product far surpasses the fee you resell it for. Well, this is exactly what has happened over the past six years.

Furthermore, while the Township has run a loss, for six years, meaning we pay the City of Newark more than what we collect in water bills, we have also been out of contract for many years. This means, that we currently owe and have already begun to pay back the City of Newark \$1.6M in back water payments.

In 2.5 years, we have accomplished a lot. However, we are still tackling several issues from the past. Thankfully, I am confident in the team we have in place. I believe collectively my Council colleagues and I are righting the ship and providing a good, solid foundation for Belleville to move forward.

Sincerely,
Michael A. Melham, Mayor
Township of Belleville