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Mark W. Prothero – 1956-2014

Date: November 8, 2023
To: Board of Commissioners
Soos Creek Water and Sewer District
Re: Proposed 2024 Legal Fee Rates

Honorable Board:

We are proposing a legal fees rate adjustment in the amount of 4% to be effective February 1, 2024, to reflect inflation for the year. National inflation projections from various indices for the year range from 3.7% to 4.1% - somewhat higher in Western Washington. The current billing rate schedule has been in place since February 1, 2023.

This would be an increase to \$416,000 for our annual flat fee retainer, which covers all services to the District except litigation.

For litigation, we are proposing current hourly rates remain unchanged as follows:

- Senior Partner (over 15 years' experience); \$350 per hour.
- Associate Attorney (over 5, less than 15 years); \$325 per hour.
- Senior Municipal Legal Assistant/Paralegal (over 20 years' experience); \$150 per hour.
- Law Clerk (two years of Law School – to remain at \$75 per hour. [None now])

After one year at the new retainer billing structure, my perception is that it has been a success for the District. It came at a time of a great increase in the volume of work for the District, and has given the District the opportunity to use us as necessary, without constantly having to think about the billable hours. The result has allowed the development of a very effective "team" structure with Jane and her administration. We have been able to be more responsive than ever before to the District and its requirements during these important years of transition and growth.

I also note that a significant portion of the annual retainer is recovered for the District from foreclosure collection legal fee recoveries, DE Fees, and GFC and connection charge project fees, which all include an element for legal fees, substantially reducing the impact of legal fees on service charges.

It is a privilege for us to have represented the District as our premier client over these past many years. We hope to continue that great relationship well into the future. Thank you.

Michael M. Hanis

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