

**The Town Clerk
City of Harare
Town House
Julius Nyerere Way**

[Enter date here]

Dear Sir,

I am a property owner and ratepayer in the City of Harare. In terms of Section 219 Subsection 3 of the Urban Councils Act, I hereby lodge the following objections to the proposed 2005 City of Harare increases in service charges as advertised in The Herald (9 April 2005).

1. PARTISAN POLITICAL BIAS

- a. The proposed increases are being imposed by the politically appointed representatives of central government, not by duly elected representatives of the residents of Harare. Until such time as democratically elected Councillors working with a democratically elected Executive Mayor are guiding the affairs of the city, no budget will have meaningful legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of residents of Harare.

2. AUDITED ACCOUNTS

- a. In the absence of audited accounts since 2000 to show how our money has been spent, any increased charges are unacceptable. Such accounts are a statutory requirement.

3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- a. In terms of Section 219 Subsection 2(a), before charges come into operation, proposed charges and existing charges must be advertised in two issues of a newspaper. This has not been done in respect of :
 1. Hospital, Clinic & other fees
 2. Rents charged in LDAs (Low density areas)
 3. Norton Council Houses
 4. Stadia, City Sports Centre, Recreation Grounds, All Community Halls and Centres

Merely stating as in the advertisement that fees have been increased and details may be inspected at Town House does not comply with the requirements of the Act.

4. CREMATION CHARGES:

- a. The charges levied in respect of Cremation Charges and Memorial Work distinguish between Residents, Non-Residents and Non-Zimbabweans
 1. How are these distinctions defined?
 2. How are non-residents identified?
 3. Why do these distinctions not apply to other charges for council facilities and services such as Libraries, Education and Health etc?
- b. Hindu Cremation Charges have increased by 3 222%. Why?

5. SWIMMING BATHS:

- a. The charges for the use of public swimming baths have been increased by an exorbitant amount. We should encourage the use of public facilities by residents. To charge children up to \$15 000 to have a swim will not achieve such a goal. In low density areas, public swimming pools provide a facility not only to the children of ratepayers but also to the children of their employees.

6. MARKETS:

- a. The increases range from 67% to 900 % and there appears to be no rationale for the arbitrary amounts charged.

7. HOSPITAL CLINIC AND OTHER FEES

- a. No charges are listed as required by the Urban Councils Act.

8. CITY HEALTH LICENCE FEES:

- a. Please confirm that these are charges per annum?
- b. Are these in addition to Shop Licence Fees?
- c. While some justification may be made for such a licence in respect of abattoirs, caterers and so forth why should the City Health Department licence such enterprises as Internet shops or Law Firms?
- d. The figures do not include existing charges for several sectors eg, Accounting firm, Auctioneer, Flea Market Operator etc. Are these new categories or is this an error of omission?
- e. The licence for a Bank is increased by 11 011% in May and a total of 16 567% in July. This is objectionable in the extreme.

9. VEHICLE LICENCE FEES

- a. The 1200 % increase is in excess of the inflation rate and cannot be justified. Harare should bring its licence fees into line with other urban centres especially Ruwa and Norton. Such astronomical fees will encourage residents to register their vehicles outside Harare thereby depriving the city of revenue.

10. PART (ii) OTHER FEES

- a. Why have none of these charges been increased, even by a nominal amount?

11. HARARE(PREPAID PARKING DISC) BY_LAWS

- a. There are no increases for penalties. Why not, given the chaotic state of Harare's roads and the deficit in the Parking Account?

12. SEWERAGE TARIFF

- a. Increases of 2 697% in charges is unacceptable.
- b. The increase charges for Scale 3 Effluent per cubic metre from \$960 to \$250 000 is an increase of 25 942% and is outrageous.

13. WASTE MANAGEMENT TARIFF

- a. I object in the strongest terms to any increases for a service which is currently minimal or non-existent. Rubbish collection in Highlands is currently about once every two weeks. I refuse to pay for non-existent services and will not pay except for actual collections.
- b. The unimaginative and punitive system of charging for a fixed number of collections rather than for actual collected waste is antiquated and penalises those citizens who make an effort to reduce their waste through recycling.
- c. The increase of 2 647% bears no relationship to the rate of inflation.
- d. Excessive rates for waste disposal are counter-productive and encourage illegal dumping or disposal through burning.
 - 1. What penalties apply to these anti-social practices?
 - 2. What are the current and proposed charges for dumping at city rubbish dumps?
 - 3. Has the City made any prosecutions of offenders?

14. WATER TARIFF

- a. Water is a right not a privilege: the proposed tariffs run counter to the principles of social justice. Making water too costly for many residents will encourage the use of untreated water sources such as rivers, wells and dams with the resultant negative impact upon social health. The City must cross-subsidise water tariffs to ensure an adequate affordable supply to all citizens.
- b. The City proposes increasing the charge for water supplied to the poorer residents living in the HDAs in the 40 to 69 cu metre bracket from \$70.00 currently to \$6 800 in July. This is an increase of 9 614% - an outrageous hike.
- c. The proposed increase in the fixed monthly charge from \$8 600 currently to \$25 000 in May and \$50 000 in July is unreasonable and penalises consumers.

- d. The proposed 1 July increases to Section C (Flats etc) tariffs are not increased by the same rates as Section A (Residential LDAs). Why not?
- e. Water charges for Hotels and Restaurants (Section D) and Industrial/Commercial (Section ?) are not increased at all in May and only by 24 or 25% in July. What reason is there for the preferential treatment given to these groups?
- f. Section E Monthly Water Levy for all other unconnected properties is increased by 20 864% of current charges in May and to 31 347% in July. What justification is made for this charge for a non-existent service which has no cost implications for the City in any way whatsoever?
- g. Section G: Penalties:
 - 1. There are no increases in the charges? Why not? Are these new penalties?

15. BORROWING POWER 2005

As this section appears as an integral part of the advertisement, I wish to state my objections in terms of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) 290 subsection 3 paragraph (a) to the proposed borrowing of \$308 billion on the following grounds:

- a. LACK OF AUDITED ACCOUNTS
 - 1. The City of Harare has failed to produce audited accounts as required by the Urban Councils Act. The last accounts are for the year 2000. Citizens have not been given such information as is essential for them to make an informed analysis of the proposed charges in relation to the financial operations of the city.
- b. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:
 - 1. In terms of Section 290 subsection 3 paragraph (a) sub-paragraph (iii), you are required to advise that details of the proposals may be inspected at the office of the council. You have not complied with this statutory requirement.
- c. SALARIES
 - 1. Please confirm that no part of any funds so raised will be used to meet the costs of any staff salaries.

Finally I further object to the fact that the evaluation of my objections will be done by the very people who are proposing the increases. This strikes me as blatantly prejudicial to the prospects of a fair and non-partisan assessment of my concerns.

Yours faithfully

[Enter name and address here]
cc Combined Harare Residents Association