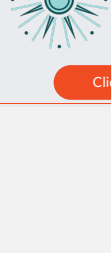


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ay launches free newsletter to help residents stay informed



(Polina Tankilevitch/CHAT News)

By Eli J. Ridder | @EliRidder

Medicine Hat ratepayers association slams utility fee in letter to council

Dec 5, 2023 | 4:53 PM

MEDICINE HAT, AB – A **letter to council** Tuesday criticized a fee on the publicly-owned Medicine Hat utility company that is paid for by taxing residents.

The municipal consent access fee is commonly used by municipalities for third-party utility companies setting up shop on city-owned property.

The utility then downloads the cost to customers to make up the money.

Despite having a publicly-owned utility company, **Medicine Hat council in 2018 added the fee to fill a \$16 million deficit in its budget.**

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Since the City of Medicine Hat owns its own utilities, the plan was to charge the city’s utility department and have ratepayers cover the difference.

EVENT PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 25

Event aims to help caregivers share stories and identify gaps in services

Oct 22, 2023

Thumbs up: #dominicstrong auction back this weekend

Sep 29, 2023

PETFEST ON SATURDAY

PetFest debuts amid rising demand at Animal Food Bank

Sep 27, 2023

The Medicine Hat Utilities Ratepayer Association asked mayor and councillors why the fee still stands despite initial plans from the previous council to have it phased out by 2023.

READ THE LETTER

The association asks in the letter if the fee is still needed to address the budget shortfall and requested transparency around the details.

The association asked council why the fee is rising while the utility makes \$100 million in profits from the last two years.

The fee is set at set at 15.25 per cent but is scheduled to increase to 18 per cent in 2024, according to the association.

Sounantha Boss, the president of the ratepayers association and a local business owner, wrote in the letter that residents could do without another rising fee amid an uncertain economy.

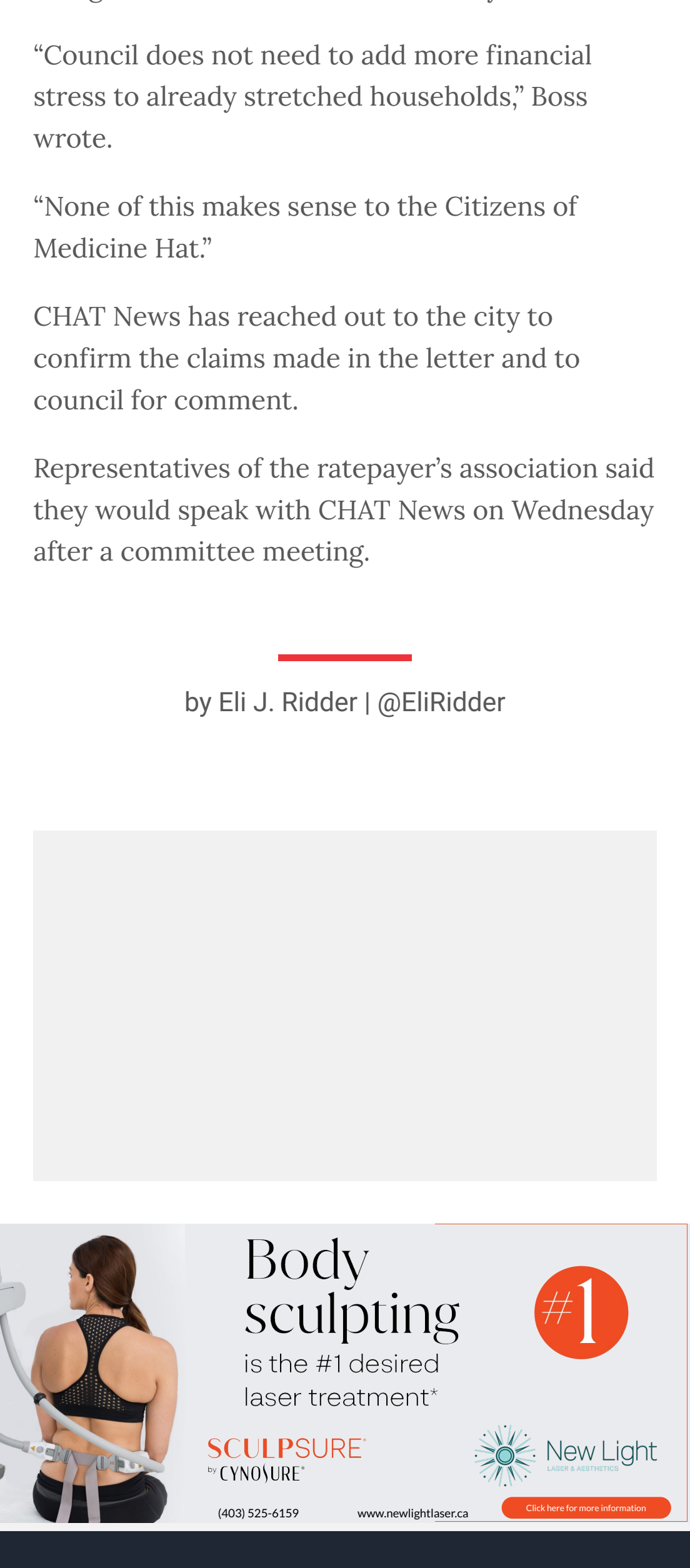
“Council does not need to add more financial stress to already stretched households,” Boss wrote.


“None of this makes sense to the Citizens of Medicine Hat.”

CHAT News has reached out to the city to confirm the claims made in the letter and to council for comment.

Representatives of the ratepayer’s association said they would speak with CHAT News on Wednesday after a committee meeting.

by Eli J. Ridder | @EliRidder






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