

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

JUNE 24, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chairman Jonathan Smith. Committee members present were Jan Materni, Jonathan Smith, and Barry VanHoozen. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator, Laura Alkire, Law Director, and Alice Godsey, Director of Public Utilities.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Josh Fleckner, 26625 Amberwood Drive, was present to discuss a high water bill he received earlier this year. The bill was for 7,800 cubic feet but subsequent bills have gone back down to normal. Mr. Fleckner said that his back-up sump pump is capped off, he checked the toilets, and he has had no leaks. Mr. Smith commented that this type of thing has happened a few times in the last couple of years. There was discussion regarding whether the reading device could be defective, but Mr. Fleckner said that he compared the reading on the bill to the meter and it is accurate. Ms. Godsey was asked about testing the meter, but she said that since the consumption is back down, she does not believe they would find anything, so Mr. Fleckner would be charged for the meter test. Mr. Smith told Mr. Fleckner that we already checked with the meter manufacturer and they say that the meter cannot run fast; if it malfunctioned it would run slow. The Committee sympathized with Mr. Fleckner but said without something tangible, they could not give him a credit. The Committee asked that the Administration check with the manufacturer and with other communities that use the same type of meter to see if there are any commonalities.

MOTIONS ON SEWER CREDITS

Ms. Godsey requested approval of the following sewer credits. She said that they verified that the water used did not enter the sanitary sewer system.

228 Mulberry Street, \$1,568.68 - valve that leaked under the basement while they were on vacation

1367 Running Brook Drive, \$2,069.76 - failure of primary sump pump so back-up sump pump ran

903 Shearwood Drive, \$2,014.16 - leaking valve above water back-up sump pump

The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of these sewer credits.

DISCUSSION OF LATE FEES

Ms. Alkire reviewed information gathered in response to last month's discussion about late fees. She stated that there are approximately 10,000 service accounts with 8,250 accounts billed directly by the City. She said that customers can get their bill via mail, email, and customers can go online to view their bill and usage history. She also reviewed the ways the bill can be paid which include dropping it off in person, by mail, online, or by using ACH. Of the 8,250 accounts billed, 836, or approximately 10%, are perpetual late payers, meaning they were late three or more times in a year. Penalties are averaging

\$14,506.73 per month with 908 late payments. Ms. Alkire stated that we charge a 15% penalty, while Sylvania and Maumee charge 10%, Toledo is 5%, the Northwestern Water and Sewer District charges \$5 or 10%, and Oregon just turns off the service after five days' notice. There was discussion regarding granting a one-time waiver of the penalty in a rolling 12-month period. However, there was some hesitation because that would give the perpetual late payers a waiver even though they are habitually late. The Committee agreed 3-0 to recommend approval of a change to Rule 24 to add language that if payments are postmarked on time, there will be no penalty.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Godsey reminded the Committee that the State's prohibition on water shut-offs ends July 10.

Ms. Materni called attention to an email received from a resident about some work that will be done near his property. Ms. Godsey said that she contacted the gentleman and told him that all work would take place in the right-of-way. Mr. Smith stated that Ms. Godsey and Matt Choma, Deputy Director, have done a phenomenal job getting back to customers that have questions.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith, Chairman
Public Utilities Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.