

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Board of Commissioners

FROM: Bryan Gruesbeck, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Water Sewer and Adjustment Charge Policy

DATE: July 22, 2013

Background: In previous meetings you discussed a situation involving a water customer who received an abnormally high water bill. This customer, Ms Torbert, received an abnormally high water bill and has requested that the Town assume costs associated with her water bill, as read on 5/29/13. She is also requesting that the Town assume the cost of a plumber who checked for leaks in her private system. The plumber determined that at the time of his visit, he could not determine a cause for the lost water. She is not aware of the cause of the leak and assumes it is due to a faulty Town water meter.

On 5/31/13, Staff removed the water meter in use during the large reading and tested it to ensure that it was not the cause of an inaccurate reading. According to the subsequent test, the water meter was in working order. Nonetheless, a new working water meter was also installed at her residence.

Ms. Torbert does not have sewer service at this residence. Therefore, the Town cannot offer relief from her the sewer charges on her water bill as it does in similar situations with other residents. Moreover, if the Town cannot determine that its system or equipment was at fault for a water loss (e.g. a broken meter would be our fault), it does not typically offer any billing relief.

In February, Mandy Cartrette, Finance Officer, provided some samples of policies from nearby communities. In essence, the policies generally allowed for some relief when customers provide evidence of the leak and that it was fixed. Settlements are typically established by averaging the previous twelve (12) months of billings.

On June 10, at the request of the Board, Staff presented a draft Water and Sewer Charge Adjustment Policy that was developed from neighboring communities. It should be noted that none of the communities offered amnesty from a water/sewer charge when no cause of the leak could be determined.

Action Requested: Consider the policies, if appropriate, or provide additional direction for Staff on the development of a desirable Water and Sewer Adjustment Policy.