

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: SC - 2

DATE: August 26, 2010

SUBJECT: Utility Issues

CONTACT PERSON: Janice Leonardi, Utility Clerk

ISSUE:

The issue before the Sub-Committee is to review the attached requests for utility relief case by case and make an informed decision as to approve or deny each request (Attachment A). If time permits, discuss outstanding utility issues.

SUMMARY:

In March, 2010, Staff brought several utility issues to Sub-Committee. Due to a shortage of time the Committee was not able to discuss all the issues. The following remaining issues are being brought to Utility Committee:

1. Does Committee want clarification to Title 13 (Water) to specify when payments are due to avoid disconnect or would they like to adopt a policy (resolution)? The letter sent out to customers states payment must be received by 5:00 PM the day BEFORE turn offs. However, customers come in at the last minute in the morning as turn offs are being processed and this disrupts the process and causes confusion.
2. What policy does Committee want to set for businesses on the disconnect list? Businesses that need their water such as restaurants and dental clinics create additional work for staff. As a general practice staff tries to work with these businesses to make payment arrangements. If a business that requires water is disconnected, staff is required to notify the Health Department. (Not appreciated by the business). However, there have been a couple situations where a business was delinquent by three or more months, and closed the business and left the owner of the property with the bill. Should staff continue to treat businesses differently than residences by calling them and working with them on payment arrangements?
3. Would Committee like to set a policy regarding utility account payment arrangements? Currently, when a customer is on the disconnect list for owing two months utility charges, Staff allows the customer to call and make a verbal payment arrangement which may be for one or both the months owing. The customer is permitted to extend the payment date past turn off day. A large percentage of customers on the turn off list call and make a payment arrangement **every** month when they receive their disconnect notice. A majority of cities only allow one or two payment arrangements per year due to hardship. Some cities also require the arrangement to be made in writing.

UTILITY COMMITTEE MEETING
August 26, 2010
6:00 PM – Council Chambers

- 1) Account # 6753
700 Main Street

RE: Requesting relief of excess water charges due to leak = \$450.73

Realtor had water turned on to show house and did not realize there was a broken supply line to the toilet. Water was turned off. Customer was notified February 1, 2010. Owner of the property had line repaired May, 2010 and submitted relief request.

- 2) Account # 5774
516 6th Street

RE: Requesting relief of excess water charges due to broken water line = \$266.52

Customer noticed wet area on driveway first part of 2010 and originally didn't think too much about it, thought it was from rain. Weather got better and wet area did not go away. Her consumption was also gradually increasing each month. Upon investigation, she found a broken line between meter and house and had it repaired June, 2010.

- 3) Account # 5941
30623 134th Street S.E.

RE: Requesting relief of excess water charges due to vandalism = \$750.02

*******NOTE - THIS IS SECOND REQUEST IN 5 YEAR PERIOD*******

Customer had leak at irrigation valve in fall of 2008. He repaired it and submitted a utility committee relief request for \$104.13 which was approved and applied to his account in March, 2009. At the time of repair, customer turned irrigation valve off. The end of December, 2009, some kids messed with the irrigation valve and turned it on. When he realized what happened he turned it off and has since capped it off. A couple other neighbors in the area had vandalism issues also, one had their meter face smashed in. Customer is fully aware of the once every five year policy in regards to utility relief request. However, he would like the committee to consider giving him relief for some or all of the excess water charges due to the immense hardship on him.