

UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 26, 2015
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Daniel Peterson
Shawn Libby
Tom Willis

OTHERS PRESENT

Blaine Cox, Deputy City Manager
John Yerardi, Appellant
Elvira Dun, Appellant
Martha Fowler, Appellant for
Rochester Historical Society

MEMBERS ABSENT

Arthur Hoffman

MINUTES

1. Call to Order.

Daniel Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. Arthur Hoffman was absent; all other Board members were present.

2. Acceptance of November 10, 2014 Minutes

Tom Willis **MOVED** to accept the November 10, 2014 minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by Shawn Libby and was **ADOPTED** on a unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business

3.1 Yerardi Appeal

Mr. Yerardi was present and provided the Board with an explanation of his abatement request.

The appellant seeks an abatement for higher than normal usage as well as an investigation to explain the discrepancies in their meter readings.

Deputy City Manager Cox's recommendation is that no abatement be granted in response to this request.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. No leaks have been identified.
2. Both of the new meters installed have measured increased usage as compared to the readings of the previous meter. The first new meter was flow tested and found to be reading accurately.

Tom Willis **MOVED** to abate 42 units of water at a value of \$196.14. Shawn Libby provided a second to the motion which was then **ADOPTED** by a unanimous voice vote.

3.2 Wentworth Appeal

The appellant seeks an abatement of \$5.64 in interest charges.

Deputy City Manager Cox's recommendation is that no abatement be granted to this request.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. Invoice for water meter installation was mailed to the correct address and was received by the customer as evidenced by his visit to the Revenue Building on September 23, 2014 in an effort to discuss the billing.
2. Customer's inability to "address the bill" on September 23, 2014 when the Utility Billing office closed early does not eliminate his responsibility to make payment in a timely manner.
3. Per the City's Water Ordinances, specifically, Section 17.19 Billing and Payment, "Water bills shall be due and payable upon presentation and shall become delinquent thirty (30) days after the date of issuance. Interest shall accrue on bills not paid when due...the failure of a customer to receive water bills does not relieve the customer of the responsibility of making prompt payment...."
4. Although the Utility Billing Office was closed on September 23, 2014 when the customer appeared at the Revenue Building, the Tax Office was open and able to take the customer's payment.

Tom Willis **MOVED** to deny the request for abatement. Daniel Peterson provided a second to the motion which was **ADOPTED** by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Appeals

4.1 Blougouras Appeal

The customer seeks abatement of sewer fees due to a malfunction of steam traps on candle making equipment.

Deputy City Manager Cox recommends abatement of 33 units of sewer fees valued at \$205.92, provided the customer supplies proof of steam trap repairs.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. Steam traps on a steam boiler are designed to discharge condensate with a negligible loss of water. The customer claims that one or more steam traps malfunctioned causing an excess loss of water. This "leak" occurred in a manner such that the leaked usage did not enter the sewer system.
2. Total usage used 50 units
Avg units used in
previous 4 quarters 17 units
Estimated leaked usage 33 units

Tom Willis **MOVED** to postpone action upon this abatement request until the Board's next meeting. Mr. Willis explained his desire to have the next set of usage readings in hand to better inform the Board's decision. Daniel Peterson seconded the motion which was **ADOPTED** on a unanimous voice vote.

4.2 Wheeler Appeal

The appellant seeks an abatement of \$124.80 in sewer fees due to a leak in his basement.

Deputy City Manager Cox recommends abatement of 23.75 units of sewer fees valued at \$148.20, provided the customer supplies proof of the leak and related repairs.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. The customer claims to have experienced and repaired a leak in a location from which the leaked usage did not enter the sewer system.
2. Total usage used 60.00 units
Avg units used in
previous 4 quarters 36.25 units
Estimated leaked usage 23.75 units

Tom Willis **MOVED** to abate 23.75 units of sewer fees valued at \$148.20, provided the appellant provides proof of the leak and related repairs. Shawn Libby provided a second to the motion which was the **ADOPTED** by a unanimous voice vote.

4.3 Dun Appeal

Ms. Dun was present and she explained the basis of her abatement request to the Board. The appellant seeks an abatement of \$218.40 in sewer fees due to a hose left running in her backyard.

The recommendation from Mr. Cox is for abatement of 35 units of sewer fees valued at \$218.40. In addition, Mr. Cox recommends that no further abatements be granted for the same circumstances in the future.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. The customer states that water was left to run in the back yard.
2. Total usage used 47 units
Avg units used in
previous 4 quarters 12 units
Estimated leaked usage 35 units

Daniel Peterson **MOVED** to abate 35 units of sewer fees valued at \$218.40. Shawn Libby provided a second to the motion which was **ADOPTED** by a unanimous voice vote.

4.4 Historical Society

Martha Fowler was present representing the Historical Society.

The Historical Society seeks an abatement for a water leak. The leak occurred last quarter and the Society was granted a 25% hardship abatement from the UAB. The Historical Society now requests a 25% hardship abatement for the remaining leaked usage that was billed this quarter.

Deputy City Manager Cox recommends an abatement of 25% of the current usage fees valued at \$70.92.

The above recommendation is based upon the following findings:

1. The UAB granted a 25% hardship abatement last quarter due to a leaking toilet fixture. This "leak" lasted into the current billing quarter.
2. Current Usage 26 units
Water Fee X 4.67 unit
 \$121.42

Current Usage 26 units
Sewer Fee X 6.24 unit
 \$162.24

Total Fees of \$283.66 x 25 % = \$70.92

Daniel Peterson **MOVED** to issue an abatement of 25% of the sewer fees valued at \$70.92. Shawn Libby provided a second to the motion which was **ADOPTED** on a unanimous voice vote.

5. Water and Sewer Rates

Deputy City Manager Cox explained that the rates data in the meeting packet are the materials used last year for determining a proposal to take to the City Council. He asked the Board for any changes they wanted in the format and content for this year's proposal process. After a brief discussion, the consensus of the Board was to use the same data and format as last year.

6. Financials

There was no discussion on the Monthly Financial Statements.

7. Other

Mr. Cox informed the Board that no abatement requests have been received for the February meeting, therefore, the next meeting of the UAB will be March 9, 2015.

Daniel Peterson requested an update at the March meeting on the revisions being contemplated to the abatement request form.

8. Adjournment

Daniel Peterson **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Tom Willis provided a second to the motion which was **ADOPTED** on a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 P.M.

Respectfully,

Blaine M. Cox
Deputy City Manager

BMC: sam