



WEST DES MOINES WATER WORKS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING COMMUNICATION

DATE: February 15, 2023

ITEM:

5. Recommendations from Committees
 - b. Customer and Community Relations
 1. Motion – Denying a Waiver of Water Usage and Associated Charges at 932 32nd Street

SUMMARY:

Mr. Del Ray K. Christenson, 932 32nd Street, December municipal services bill was for 97,000 gallons. The vast majority of the water (96,000 gallons) was used between Nov 26 and Dec 13, which is 18 days. The average usage during this time period would have been 5,333 gallons per day, or 222 gallons per hour. While that is a lot of water, it isn't unheard of to see a running toilet use that much water.

Del Ray and his spouse attended the last Board Meeting to contest the bill. They are upset because they do not believe anything in their home was using water. They have not paid the bill yet and all late charges and the disconnection for non-payment is currently blocked. The water meter was removed and sent to Mid-American Meter in Minnesota for independent testing with results returned on February 8, 2023. The meter ran a bit slow, not fast, which is fairly common when meters get tested but no reason to believe the meter is faulty. Below are the results:

15.00 GPM 99.6% accurate
2.00 GPM 97.75% accurate
0.25 GPM 90.65% accurate


The water meter reads in 1,000 gallon increments. Water Works does not have a way to alert customers regarding high usage when meters are read in 1,000 gallon increments. Staff can offer alerts when meters are read in single gallons and they have smartpoints because staff get alerts when meters are using more than 10 gallons and hour, but for 1,000 gallon read meters staff cannot determine hourly usage.

While Del Ray noted some days show more usage and other days show less usage, it is important to note that not all his meter reads each day come from the same time of day, or 24 hours apart. One day his meter might have had a read a 2 am while the next day the read might have been from 1 pm and then the meter was read again a midnight. We only need one read each month for billing purposes.

The Customer and Community Relations committee has indicated a desire to keep with the existing policy and require the Christenson's to pay for the water usage. While it is unfortunate that a leak occurred, it is not prudent given the number of leaks staff encounter each week to waive the usage since the meter is not faulty.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Concur with the Customer and Community Relations Committee and Deny a Waiver of Water Usage and Associated Charges for 932 32nd Street.

Prepared by: 

Approved for Content by: 