

The joint Water Authority/Council meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by President, Jeffery Wright, with the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

In Attendance for Council:

Jeffery Wright  
Dennis Heefner  
Maria Marcinko  
Raymond Spencer  
Mayor Thomas Acri

In Attendance for Authority:

Mayor Thomas Acri  
Raymond Spencer  
Howard Gray

David A. Wion, Solicitor  
Douglas E. Brown, Borough Manager  
Kathy I. Sosnowski, Executive Assistant  
Michele Powell, Utility Billing Clerk  
Brian Handley, Water Distribution Foreman  
Vaughan Leer, Navarro & Wright

Michael Solomon,  
Solicitor

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss properties with mixed residential/commercial use and the preferred methods of billing these customers for sewer usage. Mr. Heefner reminded all that even if we claim the landlord is responsible for payment, he could still have tenant responsibility listed in the lease. The mayor asked how many people have properties with more than one unit on the same meter; Ms. Powell and Mr. Handley estimated there are probably 50 to 60 properties with one meter. Mr. Wion indicated that we will continue to experience difficulties accessing interior meters in multi-use units. Mr. Handley stated that access is the main issue and the Borough's policy is to not go into buildings to read interior meters; if the shutoff is at the curb, Borough employees will have easier access to shut off only non-payers in the building.

Mr. Wion advised that on the recommended billing options list from HRG, options 1, 3, 4, and 5 are too complex and would take great administrative time to process; option #2 gives the owner the option to install a separate meter for residential use if he does not want to be charged the commercial rate from one meter. He also advised to keep it an *option*, not a mandate.

Option #2 states:

Allow buildings with mixed use to install a separate meter for residential use.  
Bill the commercial use based upon the commercial rate and the residential use based upon the residential rate.

Cost estimates according to Mr. Handley are:

- If split at curb, \$2,000-\$5,000
- If tapped at main with new tap in fees, \$10,000 because of

having to dig in street

- Inside plumbing - \$1,000-\$2,000
- Mr. Handley believes most people would split at sidewalk.

Mr. Leer advised that the installation be within the public right-of-way; this would allow for easier access and avoid the Borough having to get a permit from Penn DOT to dig in the street. He also advised that new lines being hooked up to our aging distribution network could jeopardize the system as mains are being cut for 2 separate lines. He recommended that Mr. Handley and staff be involved in the process of re-piping the units and splitting the lines.

Mayor Acri requested that Borough staff construct and send a letter stating the options for owners of mixed-use properties. Mr. Leer suggested that we assess vacant storefronts at the residential rates until they are occupied. Mr. Heefner reminded all that the sewer fund depends on the money that was already set up as commercial payments; if we shift too many properties to residential rates, we'll lose money that was expected. Mr. Wion suggested that we continue billing at the commercial rate unless the property owner provides separate meters. Mr. Wright said a letter could accompany the next water and sewer bill to address the options and let the owners that they are available.

Mr. Brown asked Ms. Powell what the current delinquency rate is; then he requested a report of delinquent bills for 1) over 30 days, 2) over 60 days and 3) Front Street. A discussion then proceeded concerning other billing issues. No motion was needed regarding mixed-use billing, as all agreed to retain the current billing process that was approved at the June 23, 2011 Council meeting.

Ms. Powell and Mr. Handley recently held a meeting with Mr. Brown in which they explained how special situations have been handled in the past, such as exorbitant usage and possibly false "zero" meter readings. Mr. Wright reminded them to check on the usage for 415 Catherine St., which increased from 10,000 gallons per quarter to 32,000 gallons per quarter. [Ed. Note: when checked, it was found that a Borough employee notified them on 8/15/2011 that three toilets at the property were leaking.]

Ms. Marcinko expressed concern about higher readings than usual for single people in apartments. It was explained that meter reading is by the thousandths under the new system; if the usage is 4,000 gallons or under, they will see savings. If the resident uses more than 4,000 gallons, they will see higher charges. She questioned how proof of usage is validated. Mr. Handley explained that any time a resident questions their meter reading, our employees will schedule a re-read, as well as try to help them find leaks, etc.

On another note, Mr. Spencer questioned whether we would have to increase water rates again soon. Mr. Leer reminded all that at the July Water Authority meeting, it was decided to hold off on any increase; in the future we may have establish 2 small increases instead of one large one. Mayor Acri also suggested that we start no new projects for 2012 to

preserve funds and build capital reserves. Mr. Handley also stated that they have had no major problems; the Walnut St. repair was mostly due to lots of heavy equipment traffic due to the Felton Lofts construction. It was also suggested that Borough employees try to keep up with smaller projects to save money instead of contracting out the work; a priority list should be created of what repairs are needed most.

In response to questions about meter accuracy, Mr. Brown stated that Borough employees are in the process of switching to a newer jet flow meter which can indicate when water is used.

To date, 650 of these meters have been installed; employees are trying to install 1,000 per year. "Zero-read" meters will be replaced first, followed by any meters not reading correctly and older meters if problems are occurring. Mr. Handley explained the difference between positive displacement and jet meters and said the new company's name is Master Meter. This may want to be discussed at the next Water Authority meeting.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No residents were in attendance.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business before Council, on a motion by Mr. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Gray, the meeting adjourned at 6:30p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Douglas E. Brown  
Secretary

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Kathy I. Sosnowski  
Executive Assistant