**WCSD Customer Discrepancies**

Presented at the meeting on 5-21-2023 for Board decision

1. Customer (B) Purchased a property beginning of 2021. They were the renter of one of the 2 units on this property before they purchased it. They paid their part of the bill, but never received the bill because it went to the property owner. They would pay in person once a month. When they purchased the property they were told by previous employees that there was a $12,000 water bill that needed to be paid to transfer water into their name. That's when they told her there was an enormous leak that had been going on for 6 months and now that she is the property owner she needed to pay for it. Customer (B) asked why they didn’t shut the water off or let her know when she came in to pay the bills. They told customer (B) that they wrote on the bills that there was a leak and sent them to the property owner. Customer (B) asked if she should go to the Board for assistance and was discouraged from doing that. They told customer (B) the board isn’t going to do anything and working with them instead of the Board is her best bet. They settled on $6800 and told her that was a good deal. Customer (B) is concerned if the money was deposited to WCSD and feels like it was insane to allow a leak of that size to continue for 6 months without either shutting it off or telling her one of the times she paid her part of the bill. The previous landowner was not paying the bill at all, which she was unaware of. Customer (B) currently wants a new connection on their second, neighboring parcel, which is undeveloped.

I tried to find historical information on Customer (B) and the prior owner. I can find some payment info on desktop quickbooks but nothing from the past owner on intuit. The former owner’s account is not in the billing system anymore which is interesting because there are several other former owners whose accounts are still in the system and were even still getting billed (just not sent). The transfer of ownership in the billing software happened in Aug 2021.

Customer (B) provided copies of invoices she received when she paid the bill. I have reviewed the bank statements and there are 2 months there were deposits that could have been from Gillian but there’s no way to know for sure. It was a check so I’m sure it had to have been deposited into Weott’s bank account because that’s who she wrote it out to

Customer (B) is not requesting a credit. She was concerned about the situation and wanted the Board to be aware. However, I recommend the connection fee for the hook ups get waived but all construction costs be paid by the customer. It’s our job to turn off a 231,000 gallon a month water leak and/or immediately notify the property owner. To allow it to go on for 6 months is negligent. For an employee to discourage a customer from going to the board to discuss an issue is so wrong. For transparency, the Board should approve all credits of high value, and write a very specific policy for employees to follow.

After researching this I found that there is still technically a moratorium in Weott and it should stay in place until we upgrade our spring sources, so we can feel confident about the amount of water we are able to produce. We will be upgrading the spring infrastructure this summer. The new hook up fees are currently: Water $1000, Sewer $2500.

I recommend the Board approve offering Customer (B) no cost connections for her parcel, but that construction does not begin until spring source infrastructure is upgraded and moratorium is lifted. She would pay for all construction costs associated with the connection.

1. Customer ( C ) has been being billed incorrectly. There is a master meter with several individual customer meters after. The master meter was not being billed based on usage. It wasn’t being billed at all. Some months, the individual customer meters were not billed based on usage either. Some months, they were charged 7 base rates each month for the 7 individual customer meters with no meter readings. Without the master meter being read and billed no one noticed 2 very large leaks that were on the transmission lines between customer meters, likely for many months. The water never surfaced and was not easy to locate once we discovered their meter was showing a leak. The units of the master meter also were not recorded correctly. They were shown as cubic feet in the system but were actually 100 gallons. So for every 100 gallons they used, if they had been billed based on usage, they would have been billed for 7.48 gallons. This also made determining a leak difficult because the dial on a 100 gallon meter appears to move very slowly when there is actually a leak. Without a customer having a bill that shows usage, they will never know if they have an underground leak. It is our job to provide them with the information they need to be aware of their usage. The December to January meter readings showed 125,000 gallons going through customer ( C ) master meter. 35,000 gallons went to the 7 customer meters. There is an undetermined usage from a small laundry mat included in the overage. It is part of the master meter usage. So, a little under 90,000 gallons was unmetered usage that never surfaced. The cost of just the overage usage on the master meter was $960.74. March to April’s overage usage was 5847 gallons. April to May’s was 14142 gallons but they had a leak that they repaired. I think the normal usage will be closer to 5847 gallons.

I recommend we credit half of the documented over based on their March to April usage. 84,153 gallons/2=42,076 ($475)

1. Deposits- The new ordinance is on the agenda for review. If the Board approves it we can issue credits on peoples accounts that we have records of the deposits. I recommend we wait to apply the credits until the rate increase is approved. It will take us some time to prepare the list of people who have credits due and have the board review it anyways.
2. Customer D has not made a payment since 2-21-2020. Water has been shut off longer than 5 months but unknown exact amount of time. We have made contact with the owner several times where he says he is coming in to pay and does not. The following letter is being sent to this customer (personal information removed).

Date: 5-22-2023

Address: xxx, Weott, CA 95571

Our investigation into your account shows that you have not made a payment since 2-21-2020. Ordinance number 2.2.8 Liens & Collections States:

If a Lien is filed on your property because of non-payment, a fee of $125 will be added.

When the WCSD starts legal action for the collection of charges of fees, the customer will be charged for those costs, regardless as to who prevails in the legal action.

If payment is not made and connections are shut off for three months a lien may be placed on the customer’s property.

If the debt is not paid after a year the connection is terminated and new connection fees are required, as well as all outstanding debt paid, in order to restore service.

Weott CSD staff have tried to collect payment from you numerous times in the past two months with no success. We have payment plans available.

Total due is $3148.44

A payment plan is attached with this letter as an option, but every payment must be made on time or a 10 day shut off notice will apply and 30 day connection termination will be reinstated.

If we do not receive payment within 30 days we will terminate and remove the connections. Currently the new connection fee for both sewer and water total is $3500.00. That will be substantially increasing very soon.

Please make a payment as soon as possible and contact Jamie at 707-223-6598 to avoid termination of connections

1. Customer E believes someone was stealing water from his home. He has spoken to us about it for a few months. We recommended he put up cameras and motion detector lights. After he did that he has had normal water usage and no evidence of water tampering. He is requesting a credit. Currently, credits are only given for repaired leaks, and water theft on the customer’s side of the meter is their responsibility. He has submitted a letter to the board for consideration.