



PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 10:30 AM

66575 Second St, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Griffith called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM

ROLL CALL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Robert Griffith, Member Ivan Sewell

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Macy, Marion Champion, Danny Friend, Lisa Pelton, Arturo Ceja, Dori Petee

PUBLIC INPUT

No public present

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. DISPUTE OF CHARGES

66626 12th Street - Discussion and action on a dispute of water consumption charges.

Caroline Ortel was present by phone, and her written statement was read into the record:

Thank you. I will need to attend by phone. My grievances remain, as I have already explained to the Board in November and to you several times. Grievances: 1. The loss of 188,496 gallons of metered water covering two MSWD billing statements 2. Lack of timely alert to potential leak or high usage that was brought to my attention when I received the second statement dated 10-14-24 from MSWD and immediately next day had a plumber repair the leak. 3. MSWD isn't in sync with mission to preserve water and make every drop count. Need to establish better alert such as text the customer with a red flag warning immediately if they cannot be reached on first phone attempt. 4. Metered water pressure may be excessively high. 5. Other Departments such as engineering may be able to help in this alert. 6. Respectfully request dismissal of all or part of charges of metered loss of MSWD metered water to my home at 66-626 12th Street, DHS. 7. Kindly relay this written text of my grievances to your meeting at 10:30 am December 10, 2024. Call me at (805)735-XXXX if any questions. Thank you for your favorable consideration of this request.

Chairperson Griffith reviewed the timeline presented in the meeting packet. He asserted that the customer noted there was someone at her home who noticed the leak before MSWD noticed the leak. Chairperson Griffith confirmed that the customer was not registered for the portal at this time. Ms. Ortel noted that the alerts would not have been sufficient even if she had registered for the portal. Chairperson Griffith stated he is registered for the portal and received a notification of continuous usage within one day. Chairperson Griffith reviewed the notes from Customer Service, stating the customer said she had a handyman on the property doing work, and he noticed a puddle of water but thought it was someone just turning the hose on and leaving it on. She mentioned that he

had advised her, but she also thought it was people leaving the water because sometimes homeless people are sleeping in her front courtyard. Ms. Ortel noted this is correct. Chairperson Griffith reviewed the credits already given to the customer, totaling \$185.00. Ms. Ortel felt this credit was miniscule. Chairperson Griffith reviewed and explained the credits once again. **** Customer's phone died, and the call was disconnected**** Chairperson Griffith read into the record Article XII D, Section 6 - Property related fees and charges.

The amount of a fee imposed upon any parcel or person as an incident of property ownership must not exceed the proportional cost of the service attributable to the parcel; the fee may not be imposed for a service unless the service is actually used by, or immediately available to, the owner of the property subject to the fee.

Chairperson Griffith noted that this means your neighbor cannot pay for your water, and the only thing the District is at liberty to do is offer the leak credits, which has already been done. Member Sewell noted that the hands of the board and committee are tied; based on the law, the District has done what it can regarding relief.

The customer is on a payment plan and is not in jeopardy of being disconnected.

The committee recommends that this appeal be denied.

Director of Finance Arturo Ceja will contact the customer with the committee's determination. The final determination will go to the full Board on Monday, December 16, 2024.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

No comments

ADJOURN

With no further business, Chairperson Griffith adjourned the meeting at 10:46 AM

Respectfully submitted,



Dori Petee
Executive Assistant