



AGENDA MEMO

Business of the City Council City of Sweeny, Texas

Meeting Date	2/20/2024	Agenda Item	
Approved by City Manager	Yes	Presenter(s)	Administration / Finance
Reviewed by City Attorney	No	Department	Utility Billing
Subject	Discussion and possible action on a billing complaint from resident located at		
Attachments	1) Statement of Events – Utility Billing Manager 2) Statement of Events – Public Works Director 3) Supporting documentation		
Financial Information	Expenditure Required:	N/A	
	Amount Budgeted:	N/A	
	Account Number:		
	Additional Appropriation Required:		
	Additional Account Number:		

Executive Summary

Beginning in October 2023, City Manager, L. Koskiniemi was notified by City Hall staff of a customer billing complaint located at 1621 Milian Circle. Customer, V. Milian, contacted L. Koskiniemi via cell phone while attending a training session in McKinny, TX. L. Koskiniemi requested staff to make an adjustment to the bill until the matter could be investigated further.

Higher usage was initially observed in September 2023 through a routine usage audit conducted by the Utility Billing Manager. Public Works investigated the usage and determined there was a leak on the customer’s line – a line that ran across other properties. Said line was capped and a new line installed running to the customer’s home directly from the main water line (See attached map).

City staff have responded to several complaints from V. Milian since initiating contact with the customer concerning usage subsequent to the consumption audit in September 2023 provided in the back up documentation. In response to the complaints, staff has completed the following at the City’s expense:

- Provided a one-time billing adjustment of \$94.68 (October 2023)
- Completed 2 meter change-out’s amounting to \$381.34
- Completed a module change out amounting to \$157.40
- Made several on site visits to diagnose, troubleshoot, and replace parts to remove any /all variables.

Customer stated, “I want to be reimbursed for any amounts that are over my average usage from January-August 2023.” (page 12/19, attached document).

Staff has continued to monitor the usage on this account. According to staff statement of events, the most recent meter and register change-out occurred on January 19, 2024, and more comparative data will be available at the end of the current billing cycle.



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Recommended Action

Utility usage is variable at all times. Comparing an average use from one period of time to the next is not a fair representation of usage. For example, a customer may have higher usage for several reasons: toilet leak, drought, filling a pool, guests, etc.

An average usage is not a static measurement. That's why it is an average of several different numbers. If a meter registers usage, the customer used the water whether they used more water one month and less the next month.

Staff has done what it possible to resolve the complaint and has found no other variables that can be addressed. For these reasons, staff has found no compelling reason to honor the customer's request to reimburse for 6 months of usage to make the monthly payment an average from a different time.

It is the professional opinion of staff that honoring a request to reimburse a customer to a forced average amount without supporting data indicating a failure on the City would set a precedent that any account user could make a request for reimbursement of utility fees when utilities were used.

Staff does not recommend Council approve this request.