



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
Your division here

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Farmer, Brown, Cassidy, Cunningham, and Ernst
FROM: Randy Berggren, General Manager
DATE: April 21, 2009
SUBJECT: Customer Complaint

I am providing some additional information for the Board as a follow up to comments provided by Commissioner Cassidy at the March 17 Board meeting regarding two specific customer complaints that he felt were representative of why members of the community do not view EWEB positively and were part of the two percent of the customers that gave EWEB a very low satisfaction rating.

I committed to providing additional information containing the facts and circumstances of those complaints to be clear about what the issues were and how they were handled. I will not use specific names in these events but I can outline the content of the issues and the staff response to these two customers.

The first issue referred to by Commissioner Cassidy was a tree trimming concern where a neighbor of a customer where we trimmed a tree for contacted our Tree Trimming Supervisor and asked for information we had regarding the trimming of the tree in his neighbor's yard. Our supervisor declined the request based on confidential customer information. A subsequent email by the customer making a public information request for this information was sent to EWEB Commissioners. That request was forwarded to our Risk Manager who handles all public records request for EWEB. The information was provided to the customer consistent with EWEB guidelines and legal requirements for making available public information.

We have not had any additional contact or inquiry from the person making the original request.

The second issue was a customer billing complaint that was sent to Commissioners indicating that they had received a bill that included nearly 100,000 Kgal of water consumption they did not use because the house sat empty and on the market for sell. Customer Service staff reviewed the bill. They initially suggested to the customer that they had a water leak. When the customer refused to accept the explanation they requested a field test of the meter. The initial field test showed some possible inaccuracies in the meter so it was pulled and brought into the meter test shop for bench testing. The bench test showed the meter to be registering accurately. While we could not pinpoint the specific leak at the residence it was established that the meter registered actual consumption on the property during the period of time in question.

The customer refused to accept that there was any kind of leak and indicated they would not pay the bill. After several discussions with the customer, the bill was paid but under protest. Since there is no formal response in EWEB's policy for a protest, staff suggested that the customer simply file an "appeal" which is the process for someone who would like further review of an EWEB issue. That appeal is reviewed by a group of EWEB staff independent of the Customer Service Department to determine appropriate issues of consideration.

Initially the customer did not file an appeal. Commissioner Cassidy talked with me several times about this complaint and his sense was that we should simply forgive the amount under dispute. I indicated that I would not set that precedence since we have these issues occur routinely. Commissioner Cassidy indicated that he was going to contact the customer to see if he was satisfied with the outcome.

I suggested to Commissioner Cassidy, at that time, to ask the customer to file further appeal to receive additional review of his complaint if he had not already done so. Apparently Commissioner Cassidy had additional follow up with the customer and the customer eventually did file an appeal. The appeal was reviewed and ultimately denied.

The consumption was held to be actual consumption. However, as is EWEB's current practice, the bill was reduced somewhat and a credit of \$114 was provided. The adjustment reduced the rate per Kgal billed to the lowest rate available consistent with the per Kgal charge on basic charge consumption. This has been EWEB's policy for several years. While the customer continues to have an account with EWEB pending the sale of his residence, the account remains in place and the credit stands until the account is closed.

In years past, and prior to this recent Policy on water leakage, EWEB had very liberal forgivenesses on customer representations that they had had an unknown water leak which caused abnormal consumption. EWEB has since revised that policy as more customers became aware of our flexibility and began to abuse it when people claimed large amounts of summer irrigation consumption were in fact water leaks that they were not aware of. In my own review of this policy/practice, I have found diverse staff views on the practicality of the current practice. I am going to pursue this policy in more detail over the next quarter to establish the merit of revisiting our current practice for a more balanced solution between EWEB interests and the customer exposure with a leak on their premises



INTEROFFICE MEMO

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
Corporate Services Division

TO: Commissioners Farmer, Brown, Cunningham, Cassidy and Ernst
FROM: Patty Boyle, Fiscal Services Supervisor
DATE: April 14, 2009
RE: 2009 Proposed Increase in Stormwater, Local Wastewater and Regional Wastewater Rates

As part of monitoring and managing EWEB's rates program, I periodically pass along information regarding rate changes proposed by the City that appear on EWEB bills.

At this time the City of Eugene is proposing to increase stormwater fees by 4.5%, and local wastewater fees by 24%. These two rate actions are beginning an administrative process that would put increased rates in place on published EWEB bills rendered after July 1, 2009. According to information received from the City, the wastewater increase is significantly influenced by the loss of Hynix and other cost increases. The stormwater increase is designed to accommodate cost increases and stabilize funds revenues throughout their forecast period.

Also, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission has recently approved an 18% rate increase which reflects a multi-year rate approach that maintains environment compliance and treatment capacity as articulated in their capital plan.

I will continue to forward information regarding these rates as I receive it.

Please feel free to contact me at Patty.Boyle@eweb.org or 484-2411 extension 3281 with any questions regarding these rate actions.



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
ELECTRIC SERVICES DIVISION

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Farmer, Brown, Cassidy, Cunningham and Ernst
FROM: Dean Ahlsten
DATE: April 14, 2009
RE: City of Eugene Enhanced Recovery Full-Scale Exercise

Issue Statement

The State of Oregon and City of Eugene will be conducting an Enhanced Recovery Full-Scale Exercise on April 28, 2009 in conjunction with Cascadia Peril 2009. Cascadia Peril 2009 scenario is based on an earthquake affecting the Pacific Northwest region. The City of Eugene's exercise will focus on networked radio communications interoperability during recovery operations. Major focus of the drill will be to evaluate the impact to law enforcement and fire/rescue efforts during a real event.

EWEB Electric and Water field personnel and security staff now share a common radio infrastructure with law enforcement agencies and as a result will be impacted by the exercise.

Background

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, federal priorities for public safety grant funding have increasingly focused on improving interoperable communications. Breakdowns in communications during the recent hurricanes along the Gulf Coast further focused federal interest on improving the ability of local, state and federal agencies to communicate across jurisdictions and first responder disciplines. EWEB has been partnering with the City of Eugene, the City of Springfield and the Lane County Sheriff's Office to construct a multi-agency interoperable trunked radio system for enhancement of communications during storm and other emergency events and to update multiple obsolete systems.

Discussion

The April 28 drill will focus on the examination of recovery issues related to the disruptions of networked radio communications following a natural disaster. EWEB's role in this exercise will be that of an observer. No specific tests will be performed by EWEB during this drill, however radio communications will be impacted throughout our service area, including communications up the McKenzie River valley. Our crews will experience impacts to voice communications throughout the drill and at times, may or may not have quality radio communications. EWEB crews are planning to do "work as usual" during the drill in order to understand how a real event will affect operations.

The exercise planning team agreed to the following exercise objectives:

1. Evaluate interoperable capabilities of the Regional Radio System while operating under various failure modes.
2. Evaluate the ability to sustain communications in the event that one or more of the area communications centers is inoperable.

Participant safety is vital during this exercise and the Exercise Planning Team has made safety a top priority. In the event of a real emergency, the exercise will be suspended and the radio system will be placed back to normal operation. A Controller from the Department of Homeland Security will be present in the EWEB Dispatch Office, and will be evaluating the drill and its impacts using protocols defined in the State of Oregon Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

Recommendation/Requested Action

No action is being requested. This memo is for informational purposes only.