

## UTILITIES SERVICE BOARD MEETING

12/17/2020

***Utilities Service Board meetings are recorded and are available during regular business hours in the office of the Director of Utilities.***

Board Vice President Capler called the regular meeting of the Utilities Service Board to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom and Facebook Live.

Board members present: Jim Sherman, Jason Banach, Jean Capler, and Megan Parmenter. Four board members were absent, Jeff Ehman, Julie Roberts, Amanda Burnham, and ex-officio Jim Sims. The second ex-officio position is currently vacant.

Staff present: Vic Kelson, Laura Pettit, Holly McLauchlin, LaTreana Teague, Chris Wheeler, Brandon Prince, and Dan Hudson.

### MINUTES

***Board member Sherman moved and Board member Parmenter seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the December 7 meeting. Motion carried, 4 ayes.***

### CLAIMS

***Sherman moved and Parmenter seconded the motion to approve the standard claims as follows:*** Vendor invoices submitted included \$208,366.43 from the Water Utility, \$12,200.00 from the Water Construction Fund, \$1,706,112.71 from the Wastewater Utility, and \$13,865.27 from the Stormwater Utility. ***Total Claims approved: \$1,940,544.41 Motion carried, 4 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Parmenter seconded the motion to approve the utility claims as follows:*** Utility invoices submitted included \$51,285.14 from the Water Utility, and \$2,525.19 from the Wastewater Utility. ***Total Claims approved: \$53,810.33. Motion carried, 4 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Parmenter seconded the motion to approve the wire transfers, fees, and payroll in the amount of \$356,220.39. Motion carried, 4 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Parmenter seconded the motion to approve the customer refunds as follows:*** Customer refunds submitted included \$382.11 from the Water Fund and \$329.83 from the Wastewater Fund.

**Total Claims approved: \$711.94. Motion carried, 4 ayes.**

### CONSENT AGENDA

**There were no items on the December 17 Consent Agenda.**

## **REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO PROCESS CUSTOMER REFUND**

Kelson requested approval from the board to process a water bill refund for a customer that will show in the January 4 Customer Refunds claims. The customer had been traveling and had a water leak at their home. Normally, CBU will receive an alarm for high usage and contact the customer or turn the water off. During this time, CBU had received thousands of alarms a day while converting to smart meters and missed the opportunity to turn the water off.

City Attorney Wheeler added, ordinarily when the board receives requests from customers to have their bill adjusted, we have to explain why we do not adjust water bills. There is no procedure in place for the water adjustment when the meter has accurately read the water that comes in and is used - regardless of how it is used. In this case, we had an accurately working meter. There is an ability to adjust bills when it is the fault of CBU. We do not have a policy or procedure in place to come to the board and ask the board's approval before we make any kind of a refund. It seems appropriate in this case, where we bear some of the responsibility for the unusually high water bill, to adjust. Staff is recommending to the board that a vote be held to make a 50% refund to the customer.

Sherman asked how this differs from other cases where a student will leave for winter break and not be notified of a leak and still be required to pay. Is it because we have new meters in place and CBU now has more of a responsibility? Kelson confirmed Sherman's question, that CBU does have responsibility, and answered that CBU is now metering every day where before, we would meter once a month and notify the customer.

Parmenter asked how many alarms per day is CBU receiving now and what is the follow-up process? CBU Assistant Director of T&D Prince answered that CBU receives 75-200 alarms a day and there is a prioritizing process for follow-up. Kelson said that in a future board meeting, CBU will demonstrate how the process works and how customers can set up their alarms through the customer portal.

Capler said, down the road, we could look at revising policies around CBU and the actions to be taken if there is an alarm, what we do if we do not catch the alarm, and formalize this process. For tonight's issue, the question for this refund is, per her understanding, we are making the argument not that the meter was broken, but our process on our end of the meter having alerted that something was going on. That particular alert fell through the cracks. We can make the case under existing statutes that generally limits our ability to refund water usage, which in this circumstance is warranted.

Kelson confirmed Capler's understanding and said that the burden is being shared between CBU and the customer.

***Sherman moved, Parmenter seconded the motion to process the customer's water bill refund. Motion carried, 4 ayes.***

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**STAFF REPORTS:**

-Kelson introduced new CBU Capital Projects Manager Daniel Hudson.

-CBU has been sampling sewers for evidence of the SARSCoV2 virus since July. Most of that effort has been funded by the Indiana Finance Authority, and we have been working with 120Water who has been managing the project. The report has been released and the results are posted to the B-Clear website (<https://data.bloomington.in.gov>).

-CBU is preparing a fact sheet regarding the rate case that will be before the Finance Subcommittee in January. Staff recommends to have a subcommittee meeting on January 4 and on January 11 to anticipate significant public comments or questions before going to the full board on January 19.

-Kelson thanked the USB for their hard work and support throughout the year.

**PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** Sherman moved to adjourn; the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm.

Julie Roberts, President

DATE