

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council held a Special Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Corbin A & E Gallery and Studio.

The purpose of this meeting was to address the draft of a policy regarding a water and sewer billing leak credit policy.

PRESENT

Eric Banks, Council Vice President (arrived late)

Jimmy Ford, Councilman

Mike Atkins, Councilman

Charlotte Scott, Councilwoman

Casey Goldsborough, Councilwoman

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Michael Sullivan, City Solicitor – via Zoom

Absent due to illness – Barry Dize, Mayor

Also in attendance; Valerie Swift, Secretary; Dean Bozman, Code Enforcement; Police Chief David Dalfonson; Kate Finucan; Grant Administrator; and Jason Loar, City Engineer.

In the absence of Mayor Dize and Council Vice President Banks, Councilman Atkins called the meeting to order, requesting a motion to open the meeting. Motion made by Councilman Ford, seconded by Councilman Goldsborough, and carried unanimously.

At this time, Councilman Atkins opened the meeting with the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Atkins requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. So moved by Councilwoman Scott, seconded by Councilman Goldsborough, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Morgan advised that in their packet, the Council has sample policies and the policy used by the Sanitary District. She advised that the Clerk's office is handling the water bills that went out on August 1st with excessive rates, making sure that they were not two month reads by offering hand held readings and providing handouts of usage. Mrs. Morgan advised that customers with excessive bills have been advised to pay the base amount by the due date until the City figures out the issue.

Mrs. Morgan advised that there are three policies to be addressed; Outside Leak from Meter to House, Toilet Leak and Interior Leak, and Establishment of a Policy Regarding Volunteer Fireman/Churches.

Councilwoman Scott inquired of the number of churches. Mrs. Morgan advised that there are 13 churches and 19 fireman in the City and 17 outside of the City.

Mrs. Morgan advised that the number of calls that have been received make it important to address the matter now and establish a policy without waiting two or three months. She advised that if a policy can be adopted for First Reader this evening, it can be revised before the Second Reader.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she is ok with a one-time adjustment with the property owner providing a licensed plumber's bill showing repairs etc. and the appeal process.

Mrs. Morgan also noted that the City is providing help in locating the leak, at no charge, for 6 weeks, but after that time frame, any leak locates need to have a charge applied.

Councilman Atkins addressed page 1, items 1 through 3 Outside Leak/Use from Meter to House excluding toilet and interior faucet leaks.

1. There will be a one (1) time per house (per owner) adjustment – OR 2 billing cycles (monthly) in a 3 year period, after which M & C will have to approve.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she was ok with a one-time adjustment per house, per owner. Councilman Goldsborough commented that one time would be hard with older homes, so he would go with 2 billing cycles in a 3 year period. Councilwoman Scott commented that she is ok with the one time per house per owner, as she doesn't want ongoing leaks. Councilman Ford commented that the customer is responsible for leaks. Councilman Atkins advised that he is ok with the 2 billing cycles in a 3 year period.

2. Billing adjustments will be made only to the sewer and will not be made until written request is received with verification i.e., licensed plumbers bill, including the location of the repair, receipt of parts or pictures to prove location of leak. Sewer Adjustment will be based on the customers 3 month previous average bill.

In reference to 2, Councilwoman Scott advised that she feels that this is fair. Councilman Goldsborough, Ford, and Atkins also advised that they were ok with this section of the policy.

Pools – 3-month (1x annual) sewer adjustment only upon written request with pool size, photo of pool and review of previous usage to verify water increase is due to pool fills. Sewer adjusted to reflect water usage average prior to season.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she would have to recuse herself, as she has a pool.

Councilman Atkins advised that he had spoken to Fire Department members concerning pool fill ups and they can either fill from a hydrant in advance, or; we can see if they want to continue with a donation for water. He advised that a lot of people use the service. Mrs. Morgan noted that Marion Fire Department brings in a check every year from pool fill ups.

Councilman Ford advised that he feels we should charge for pool water and meter the water using one fire hydrant.

Councilman Goldsborough advised that the City could charge a fixed rate and give it to the fire department.

Council Vice President Banks inquired how many pools were outside city limits and advised that he needs a number before deciding. Mr. Bozman noted that the City gets money from the County on new pool construction.

Mrs. Morgan noted that she is looking for guidance concerning the sewer portion of the swimming pool billing.

Councilman Ford advised that he is ok with adjusting the bill to reflect the water use average prior to the season. Councilman Goldsborough concurred.

Council Vice President Banks advised that he would like discussion on usage.

Councilwoman Scott advised that she would like to have Fire Chief Pruitt there to discuss pool gallonage.

Council Vice President Banks, commented concerning the first item, and advised that he was ok with adjustments being made to two billing cycles in a 3 year period, as long as they present proof that the leak had been repaired. Councilmen Ford, Atkins and Goldsborough concurred with adjustments being made to two billing cycles in a three year period, as well, and after a brief discussion, Councilwoman Scott agreed with the policy as well.

At this time, Councilman Goldsborough made a motion to adopt for First Reader, the policy regarding Outside Leak/Use From Meter to House, that adjustments be made to two billing cycles in a 3 year period, as long as they present proof that the leak had been repaired. Motion seconded by Councilman Atkins and carried unanimously.

LEAK POLICY (DRAFT)

City of Crisfield customers: Toilet leak & interior leak

EXCLUDING OUTSIDE LEAK/USE FROM METER TO HOUSE

1. There will be a one (1) time p/ house (per owner) adjustment **OR** 2 billing cycles (monthly) in a 3 year period. After which, Mayor & Council will have to approve.
2. Billing adjustments will be made only when a written request is received with verification i.e., licensed plumbers bill, including the location of the repair, receipt of parts or pictures to prove location of leak. The adjustment will be based on half of the gallons billed with a maximum credit of \$_____
3. Any customer who has been denied a credit can appeal to the Mayor and City Council.

Councilman Ford advised that he would like to table this item for further review.

Councilman Goldsborough made reference to 2, and advised that he would like a cap on the amount of the credit.

Council Vice President Banks commented that the property owner would fix the leak and he is ok with the one time per household credit. Councilman Atkins inquired if the credit would be for water and sewer or just sewer.

Councilwoman Scott advised giving a \$75 for one month. Councilman Atkins noted that it would be a one-time only deal. He advised that he needs more time to consider. Council Vice President Banks advised that he feels a one-time only adjustment is not fair; it should be 2 billing cycles.

At this time, Council Vice President Banks made a motion to table the draft for Toilet leak & interior leak EXCLUDING OUTSIDE LEAK/USE FROM METER TO HOUSE. Motion seconded by Councilman Goldsborough and carried unanimously.

POLICY REGARDING VOLUNTEER FIREMAN/CHURCH

VOLUNTEER FIREMAN / CHURCH – free water up to 4,000 gal and \$2.78 p/1k over

Mrs. Morgan advised keeping any discussion regarding the firemen between themselves.

Council Vice President Banks made a motion to table this matter. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Scott and carried unanimously.

There being no further business for discussion, Council Vice President Banks made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Ford and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary

