Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting - June 3, 2020

1. Agenda Packet

Documents:

200603 AGENDA PACKET - POSTED 200529.PDF
Notice: Pursuant to Governor Newsom’s Executive Orders N-29-20 and 33-20, which in part, provide waivers to certain Brown Act provisions, meetings of the Board of Directors will be held by teleconference. There will be no physical location from which members of the public may participate. Instead, the public may listen and/or view the meeting proceedings and provide public comment and comments on agenda items by following these instructions:

To join via Zoom Webinar from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, click on the link below:
https://zoom.us/j/91458023440

To join this meeting via telephone, please dial:
1-669-900-6833 or 1-253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 914 5802 3440

If you are unable to access the meeting using this call-in information, please contact the Board Secretary at (619) 409-6703 for assistance.

To provide public comment on non-agenda items or to provide public comment on any item of the agenda:

Before the meeting:
- Go to www.sweetwater.org; click on the “HOW DO I…” at the top of the page; and then click on the “Public Comment” link in the Contact section.

OR
- Physically deposit your public comment in the Authority’s payment drop box located in the public parking lot at the Authority’s Administrative Office at 505 Garrett Avenue, Chula Vista.

OR
- Mail your comments to 505 Garrett Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910 [Attention: Public Comment].

All written public comment submissions must be received 1 hour in advance of the meeting and will be read aloud to the Board during the appropriate portion of the meeting with a reading limit of 3 minutes for each comment.
During the meeting:
The Chair will inquire prior to Board discussion if there are any comments from the public on each item.

- Via Zoom Webinar go to Participants List, hover over your name and click on “Raise Hand.” This will notify the moderator that you wish to speak during Oral Communication or during a specific item on the agenda.

- Via phone, you can raise your hand by pressing *9 to notify the moderator that you wish to speak during the current item.

Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting should direct such request to the Board Secretary at (619) 409-6703 at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting, if possible. The above public comment procedures supersede any Authority standard public comment policies and procedures to the contrary.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. ITEMS TO BE ADDED, WITHDRAWN, OR REORDERED IN THE AGENDA.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT.
   Opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee. (Government Code Section 54954.3).

4. ACTION AGENDA.
   The following items on the Action Agenda call for discussion and action by the Committee. All items are placed on the Agenda so that the Committee may discuss and take action on the item if the Committee is so inclined, including items listed for information.

   Appeal of a One-Time Adjustment to Customer’s Water Bill

5. CLOSED SESSION.
   At any time during the regular session, the Committee may adjourn to closed session to discuss real property matters within the attorney-client privilege, subject to the appropriate disclosures. (Government Code Section 54956.8).

6. NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

This agenda was posted at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting in a location freely accessible to the Public on the exterior bulletin board at the main entrance to the Authority’s office and it is also posted on the Authority’s website at www.sweetwater.org. No action may be taken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as provided by California Government Code Section 54954.2. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members of the Sweetwater Authority Governing Board regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the Authority Administration Office, located at 505 Garrett Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910, during normal business hours. Upon request, this agenda will be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with disabilities, as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in a meeting should direct such request to the Board Secretary at (619) 409-6703 at least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting, if possible.

To e-subscribe to receive meeting agendas and other pertinent information, please visit www.sweetwater.org.
TO: Governing Board (Finance & Personnel Committee)
FROM: Management
DATE: May 29, 2020
SUBJECT: Appeal of a One-Time Adjustment to Customer’s Water Bill

SUMMARY
On March 12, 2020, at the customer’s request, the General Manager approved a one-time adjustment for the water account of R. J. Grandmaison in the amount of $522.39, leaving a balance of $927.25 per the Authority policy. Julie Hakim-Larson, who is authorized to act on behalf of the account holder, sent a follow-up letter on May 3, 2020, addressed to the General Manager and Board of Directors, requesting a further reduction of the remaining balance of $927.25 (see attached).

On May 27, 2020, Dina Yorba, Director of Administrative Services, contacted Ms. Hakim-Larson and informed her that her request to have the remaining balance reduced was not allowed by the Authority policy and therefore had been denied by the General Manager. At that time, Ms. Hakim-Larson was offered a twelve (12) month extended payment plan to pay the balance. Ms. Hakim-Larson expressed that she has a fiduciary responsibility as the executor of the estate to exhaust all avenues to potentially reduce the balance of the high bill. She requested that her letter be presented to the Board for consideration.

PAST BOARD ACTION
The Governing Board has never approved an additional adjustment beyond what is allowed within the parameters of the One-Time Adjustment to Customers’ Water Bills Policy.

FISCAL IMPACT
If the request is approved, the maximum fiscal impact is $927.25.

POLICY
One-Time Adjustments to Customers’ Water Bills

ALTERNATIVES
1. Deny the request for a further reduction of the remaining balance of $927.25.
Memo to: Governing Board (Finance and Personnel Committee)
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2. Deny the customer’s request for a further reduction of the water bill and authorize a twelve (12) month extended payment plan to pay for the remaining balance of $927.25.

3. Grant the request to adjust the remaining balance of $927.25.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends denying the customer’s request for a further reduction of the water bill and authorize a twelve (12) month extended payment plan to pay for the remaining balance of $927.25.

ATTACHMENT
Letter to the General Manager and Board of Directors
Sweetwater Authority
505 Garrett Avenue
Post Office Box 2328
Chula Vista, CA 91912-2328
Attn.: Tish Berge, General Manager, Governing Board

May 3, 2020

RE: Account Number: [Redacted]
Service Address: 3191 Crela St., Bonita

Dear Ms. Berge and Governing Board:

I am the trustee for the home at 3191 Crela St. in Bonita. The home belongs to my elderly aunt who currently needs 24-hour care and is staying in an eldercare facility. I take care of the home and her financial matters. On March 6, 2020, I received an unusually high bill of $1602.64. I received an adjustment of $522.39 and I am writing you to ask you to reconsider the balance due of $927.25. Liz Tello helped me to apply for an adjustment given that this bill did not make sense based on historical usage patterns. There are no leaks that would account for that much water being drained during that amount of time. I was at the home the last week of January and first week of February and did not see anything that would account for that much water loss.

Gregg Harpenau-Parks sent me a letter about the adjustment (see attached letter) and I spoke with him before contacting you. Both Greg and Liz are aware of my situation and have been helping me in my efforts to get a more reasonable water bill for this period from Dec 24, 2019 to Feb 24, 2020. I appreciate their efforts and that Sweetwater was willing to make an adjustment..... but I was very surprised to find out that the adjustment was only to reduce the bill by $522.39. This still leaves a high balance of $927.25. A couple of years ago, my aunt apparently received an unusually high water bill and the error was rectified by Sweetwater; I was not involved back then so I don't know the details.

Other family members in California have checked the house for leaks and none were found. I have been told by Liz and Greg that the meter readings now appear normal. The water meter is old. Thus, no one knows exactly what dates account for the extreme readings. Also, I know that there is work being done on the waterpipes nearby in the area. Is it possible that this may have caused a problem?

I hope that you will consider reducing the balance due. Thank you very much for your time and for considering this request. Best wishes for your good health and well-being during this health crisis.

Sincerely,

Julie Hakim-Larson (cellphone, text, voicemail: [Redacted])

Cc: Liz Tello, Greg Harpenau-Parks