

Environmental & Franchise Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes, 5/17/12

Present: Michael Halley, Martha Rasmussen, Joy Messer, Scott Vaughan, Daryn Hamilton, Carl Chandler, Richard Taylor, Kirk Condon

Points of discussion

Committee discussed the details of the wireless meter opt-out program with Waterworks superintendent Carl Chandler and distribution superintendent Richard Taylor. Chandler explained that the one-time \$100 fee covers the cost of the non-standard wired meter that must be special ordered for anyone choosing to opt-out. It currently costs \$91 so the \$100 covers any price increases in the near future. The \$75/hr labor fee is designed to cover the cost of work that otherwise would not need to be done by Waterworks crew and is their standard rate for any job outside of their budgeted work. The ongoing monthly fee of \$10 covers more than just the meter reader's time spent walking to and from the hard-wired meter: it includes coverage for insurance and worker's compensation due to the safety risks associated with physically reading meters. These are very real issues that former city administrator Jeff Clawson encouraged every city department head to find ways to minimize, and increased safety was one of the main reasons behind the switch to wireless meters.

Committee also discussed the detail of who has authority to join or leave the opt-out program in a rental situation. It was decided that property owners, not renters, can make the decision whether or not to use the opt-out program, but only one time per property as long as they own it. If a property is sold then the new owner has the choice to use the program or not, and if the meter is switched they cannot change again as long as they own the property.

An alternative model of wireless meter that is only active when the meter reader activates it once a month (currently used in Vedic City) was also discussed. Carl will research the possibility of using this as the standard meter for Fairfield, replacing all other meters in time. If the Waterworks dept does switch to this style of meter then an opt-out program will no longer be offered since any concerns about radiation from the meter will be negated.

Recommendations/Actions

- Committee will submit proposed amendments to the water meter ordinance to the full council for consideration and first reading.