

City of Copperas Cove

Information Item

September 18, 2017

Utility Administration Update

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SUBJECT: Utility Administration Update

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Update to City Council on billing, customer service, customer complaints, and consumption comparisons.

2. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

City Council approved an agreement with Fathom Global Water service on May 16, 2016 to install new advanced water meters, install a meter reading collection system, provide a billing and customer information system, provide customer service support by phone and email, and provide payment collection. New meter installation began on October 1, 2016. All other services provided by Fathom went fully live on April 3, 2017.

Since the new meter installation began in October 2016, challenges with the transition have arisen and are regularly being addressed by Utility Administration, which includes City staff and Fathom staff.

3. FINDINGS/CURRENT ACTIVITY

City Council received several complaints on September 5, 2017 regarding bills with high consumption. As reported on September 8, 2017, staff determined the utility bills for Cycle 7 dated 07/28/2017 included 16 days instead of 30 days and the bills dated 08/28/2017 included 45 days instead of 31 days.

Since September 8th, staff determined additional customers were impacted by this discrepancy. Fathom indicated approximately 2,500 accounts in cycles 1, 6, and 7 have similar discrepancies. Through the last two bills, these customers were billed approximately 61 days total, which means these customers were not over charged. Fathom reported the problem occurred with a date entered manually when billing cycles 4 and 5 and was not corrected when cycles 6, 7, and 1 were billed in sequence. Fathom is preparing to send a letter to all customers explaining the discrepancy that occurred.

Due to the number of complaints continuing and customers requesting resolution, staff has prepared the attached list of current customer complaints and the status of resolution on each complaint. This list will be updated weekly for City Management and City Council.

City Council also requested a comparison between the amount of water purchased from our supplier and the amount of used or billed consumption. Staff is gathering the information from three sources and should have the full comparison to City Council once complete.

The City began the annual audit the week of September 11, 2017. The City's external auditors will specifically focus on utility billing. The external auditors have requested specific data on overall policies and reports and will test numerous accounts for internal controls and accuracy.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

N/A