

Friendsville Utility Board
Regular Meeting
July 11, 2024
Friendsville City Hall
Minutes

Present:

Mayor Steven Cardwell

Vice Mayor Sandra Bell

Commissioner Margaret Maze

Commissioner Jonathan Newberry

City Recorder Janet Ledbetter

City Administrator Kim Rogers

Building Official Barry Ottinger

City Attorney Rob Goddard

City Engineer Bob Colvin

Woody Bell

Emily Goodson

Janet Walton

Trevis Gardner

Billie Jo Knight

Caitlyn Good

Josh Small

Chris Brouwer

Steve Palmer

Absent: Commissioner Shane Rogers

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:27 p.m.

2. Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting by Commissioner Newberry, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

3. Non-agenda items from the public: Emily Goodson, 2829 Rhett Butler Dr., complained to the board because her water was cut off for non-payment. Mrs. Goodson said she had paid her bill through her bank's online bill pay. The payment had not been received in the office by the cutoff date. Mrs. Goodson said she had no idea her water was off until her babysitter called and told her. She said she had tried to call the office at 12:30 (office was closed for lunch) and called again at 1:30 and left a message. She tried to call at 4:02 and said the office was closed. She then called the emergency number and talked to the technician on call. She told him the bill had been paid and he told her was out turning on water for scheduled maintenance and that he could turn her meter back on. He was also talking to Kim Rogers on his other phone, and Kim told him that it was after 4:00 and no meters were to be turned back on after 4 p.m. Mrs. Goodson told him that she had proof she could show him that she

paid the bill, and claimed the technician told her he would turn it on but Kim didn't respond. Mrs. Goodson's husband went home and looked at the meter. It had a pin in it, which he pulled out so he could turn it back on. Her husband told her that he spoke to the technician when he arrived at their home, and the technician told him that they should have gotten a text and email message telling them they were scheduled for cutoff, which they didn't receive. The next day Mrs. Goodson sent a screenshot of her payment and contacted her bank about the payment. Her bank informed her that payments made to Friendsville Water were not automatic, but paid by check, which were mailed to the office. Her bank wrote the water department a letter showing that she paid the bill. She said that she was told her husband cursed out the technician, which she said was not true. She said they had always paid their bills on time. She also complained that she and her husband were charged a tampering fee because he removed the pin. She said there was no damage to the meter. Mrs. Goodson told the board that her child had turned on the faucet and when there was no water, he left it turned on, which allowed air to go through, and burned up the recirculating pump on their water heater. She requested to have the reconnect and tampering fees removed, along with reimbursement for the pump. She discussed the Tennessee notice of discontinuation, by which she said she should have received notice of the cutoff.

Kim Rogers gave the board a copy of the form the Goodson's filled out when signing up for water, which stated that there would be no tampering of the meter. She also asked Josh Small what Mrs. Goodson's husband said to him. Josh said he said, "who the F wouldn't give notices". Commissioner Newberry said he was more concerned with how it was cut off and how it was turned back on. He said he felt like replacing the pump was a decision for the board, but he didn't think it was the city's responsibility because her child had left it on. Kim explained that the reason they didn't turn water back on after 4 was because they had so many people cut off. On cutoff day, the technicians turn off all the meters on their list before they turn any back on. If it is after 4, they turn all the meters back on that were paid before 4. She also told Mrs. Goodson that if she wanted notifications, she would have to sign up with Invoice Cloud. The water department can't sign up customers for notifications any more since it no longer uses Code Red.

Josh Small said the bottom of the meter wasn't locked, so the pin was just pushed in there. Chris Brouwer said the holes in some of the meter yokes

were bigger, and that was probably the case since there was no damage. The board discussed how much to credit the customer. There were two reconnect fees at \$75 each, so one was added accidentally. The tampering fee was \$80. Vice Mayor Bell told Mrs. Goodson that tampering with a meter is a federal offense, and that the city could've pressed charges against her husband. Motion to correct \$75 mischarge and credit back the \$80 tampering fee for a total of \$155.00 credit to the Goodson's account by Commissioner Newberry, second by Vice Mayor Bell. Motion passed.

4. Other business not on agenda: Mayor Cardwell told the board that there were a few projects being completed with end of year money. The drainage around the operations building was being installed, and the gutters were installed on the pole barn.

5. Discussion:

Lead and copper testing: The testing has been required by the state and has been taking a long time to perform. Mayor Cardwell said he had hired a company to take over the testing. Kim Rogers advised the board that in 10 years, all the asbestos, copper and lead lines have to be replaced, including service lines. Kim also said that with the lead and copper testing, they can mark some as unknown and dig them up later after the deadline and still be in compliance.

Financial Report: The board looked over the Budget to Actuals.

Kim mentioned that she had met with Blount County Highway Department. They told her they didn't want any more water lines in their ditch line. They suggested going 20 feet off the ditch line on the Big Springs extension, which would put them on private property. They also wanted a couple of meter boxes moved, which Mayor Cardwell said wouldn't be moved yet. Mayor Cardwell said the city would do its due diligence before they do anything. The city has to submit a permit to do any work on a county right-of-way. Bob Colvin told them that the highway department owns the right-of-way, so the city would have to get permission from them. Kim said there is a big drain tile on the Big Springs route, and they want the water line to be situated away from it. She asked them about staying on the other side of the road and boring underneath it, and they said they would review the new plans. The

water department has some pipe left so the extra cost would only be for the bores. Mayor Cardwell asked Kim to schedule a meeting between him and Joel at the highway department.

6. Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Newberry, second by Vice Mayor Bell. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Mayor Steven Cardwell

City Recorder Janet Ledbetter