

# JACKSON COUNTY WATER & SEWERAGE AUTHORITY

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

I. POLICY SUBJECT: Water Billing Dispute  
POLICY PROCEDURE NUMBER: WS-002  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2-8-2001

### II. BACKGROUND

1. This procedure is intended to establish a policy for evaluating customer complaints relating to water metering disputes. Water metering disputes generally come from customers complaining about increase in their water usage and specifically about the accuracy of meters. Generally water meters do not over bill customer usage. Water meter reading errors can be made and are the most common source of such disputes and the easiest corrected.
2. If a customer's meter has been newly installed there may be a possibility that the meter has a wrong register. This can be easily determined by placing a meter that is known to be correct onto a hose bib at the customer's establishment and with no other water usage by the customer, monitor the meter usage from the hose bib and compare it with the meter usage from the customer's meter. If a meter register is found to be incorrect then the meter shall be changed out immediately and a correction established to the customer's bill.
3. Paragraph deleted

If it is concluded that the customer service line maybe leaking, consult with the customer and advise them of the possible leakage. It should be recommended to the customer that the meter valve be turned off to allow the customer an opportunity to have the line fixed by a qualified plumber.

### TIT. POLICY STATEMENT:

1. If the customer service line is confirmed to have been leaking without the knowledge of the customer and the customer shows evidence by statement from 2 licensed plumber that the service line has been repaired it shall be the policy of the Board that a one-time adjustment shall be allowed to the customer's usage. The adjustment shall be based upon an average of the previous twelve (12) months usage subtracted from the usage period in question and the customer bill adjusted to reflect the average usage plus one half of the excess usage.

2. If the customer's plumbing fixtures within his or her establishment are found to be leaking or dripping it shall be the policy of the Board that no adjustment shall be allowed. This is based on the conclusion that the customer should have noted this dripping or leaking from the fixtures and should have made the appropriate repairs.
3. Water usage for irrigation purposes whether due to normal irrigation or faulty irrigation equipment shall not be subject to adjustment.
4. In instances where it is determined that the excessive usage of water was due to a fault traceable to Jackson County, the excess above the average water usage over a twelve (12) month period shall not be charged against the customer.
5. The customer can appeal any decision by the staff for partial adjustment or non-adjustment to the Board for final resolution: Decision by the Board shall be final. During the period of dispute or appeal to the Board the customer shall be expected to have paid the average water bill and any overage thereof shall be noted to be in appeal. During the appeal process time the customer's water service shall not be discontinued for lack of payment of the amount in appeal. If the customer appeals to the Board, the customer shall present the appeal to the Board at the next Board meeting. The Board will issue a ruling on the matter. Any payment resulting from a decision by the Board on the appealed amount shall be deemed due and payable by the customer within seven (7) days or the service will then be subject to termination for non-payment.

**IV. RECOMMENDED BY:**    **Manager:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPROVED BY**

**THE BOARD: Chairman** \_\_\_\_\_    **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secretary** \_\_\_\_\_    **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

JCWSA

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EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Adoption 2-8-01

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2. If a customer's meter has been newly installed there may be a possibility that the meter has a wrong register. This can be easily determined by placing a meter that is known to be correct onto a hose bib at the customer's establishment and with no other water usage by the customer, monitor the meter usage from the hose bib and compare it with the meter usage from the customer's meter. If a meter register is found to be incorrect then the meter shall be changed out immediately and a correction established to the customer's bill.
3. If the customer's meter is not new then large usages may be due to leakage in the customer's service line from the meter to the establishment or due to plumbing leaks within the customer's establishment. To check the customer's service line it is necessary to perform a survey of all of the plumbing fixtures within the customer's establishment. This requires permission from the customer. The customer's sinks, tubs, commodes and other points of usage should be visibly observed and noted as to whether they are dripping or leaking. If no dripping or leaking is noticed ensure that plumbing fixtures are off and monitor the meter. If no indoor usage is occurring and the meter is showing usage the problem is most likely within the customer service line between the meter and the establishment.

If it is concluded that the customer service line maybe leaking, consult with the customer and advise them of the possible leakage. It should be recommended to the customer that the meter valve be turned off to allow the customer an opportunity to have the line fixed by a qualified plumber.

### III. POLICY STATEMENT:

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months usage subtracted from the usage period in question and the customer bill adjusted to reflect the average usage plus one half of the excess usage.

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IV. RECOMMENDED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager Date

RECOMMENDED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Engineer Date

APPROVED BY  
THE BOARD:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary Date

JACKSON COUNTY WATER & SEWERAGE AUTHORITY  
INVESTIGATING EXCESS WATER USAGE COMPLAINTS

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meter #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nature of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Jackson County Water & Sewerage Authority  
Employee Investigating Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Initiating Investigation: \_\_\_\_\_

Is Customer Served by New Water  
Meter (within 30-60 days). \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If Yes, was Register checked and  
Found to be accurate? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If Register is not accurate Water Meter shall be changed out and Credit provided to  
Customer.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Hydrant Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Pressure Recorder  
At the Customer's Establishment: \_\_\_\_\_

Instantaneous Pressure Reading at  
Fire Hydrant: \_\_\_\_\_

Instantaneous Pressure Reading at  
Customer Establishment: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Storage Tank at Time of  
Measurement: \_\_\_\_\_ Feet of Water in the Tank

\_\_\_\_\_ Elevation of Water in Tank.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
INVESTIGATOR DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
MANAGER DATE

\_\_\_\_\_ Check here if copy was given to Customer.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
WATER & SEWERAGE AUTHORITY

February 8, 2001

Approval of  
Water dispute  
Policy

**REGULAR MEETING**

Chairman Alex Bryan called the meeting of the Jackson County Water & Sewerage Authority to order at 6:00 p.m. Board members present included: Treasurer Keith Ariail, Secretary Larry Wood, Vice Chairman Tom Crow, Member Elton Collins, and Attorney Julius Hulsey. Manager Jerry Waddell, Superintendent Paul Mims, Superintendent Carlson, the Authority's Consulting Engineer, Charlie Armentrout, and Engineer Bob Sutton were also present. Visitors included Mark Beardsley with the Commerce News, Steve Sauls, Residents from Creek Nation and Skelton Road, Skip Nalley, BOC Chairman Harold Fletcher.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to approve the January 11, 2001 minutes. Vice Chairman Tom Crow seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**VISITORS**

Many property owners who are opposed to the gravity line voiced their opposition to the Authority Board. Susan Phillips, Sonny Pruitt, and Audry Hudson read petitions and letters aloud. Chairman Bryan stated to the visitors that the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority board would do what is in the best interest of the county.

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to stop the sewer process. He recommended the board have a work session to revisit this subject, and approach it differently to relieve customer anxiety. Treasurer Keith Ariail seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Chairman Bryan welcomed Eugene Carlson as the new Sewer Superintendent.

**MANAGERS REPORT**

Manager Waddell reported that we have prepared a payment schedule for all of the bond payments, including 1999A, 1999B, 2000A, 2000B, and GEFA. Also, the Bear Creek payment was discussed.

Manager Waddell stated that Attorney Hulsey has written the City of Nicholson a letter. The letter basically stated that we need to make sure we properly disperse SPLOST funds. The State is very strict on the guidelines for

this. In order to make sure SPLOST funds are properly dispersed, the Town of Nicholson will need to take formal action for those expenditures.

Manager Waddell reported that we drafted a letter to all Forest Lake Subdivision residents. We have received 16 responses so far which state they would sign up for water if water is available.

Manager Waddell made a recommendation to allow him to investigate a lease with the ACCG or loan with a local bank for all renovations, the forklift, parking lot, storage shelving, and chain link fence. Manager Waddell estimated approximately \$ 80,000 would cover all expenses for these projects.

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to approve the projects recommended by Manager Waddell. Also, have Manager Waddell compare a lease versus a loan, authorize him to go with the best option and authorize the Chairman to sign any documents pertaining to the lease or loan. Treasurer Keith Ariail seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Waddell reported that he had presented a form last month for a procedure on water billing disputes and water pressure complaints. He asked the Authority Board to adopt these procedures with the exception of deleting paragraph 3.

Treasurer Keith Ariail made a motion to accept the policy and procedures for water billing disputes with the deletion of paragraph 3. Secretary Larry Wood seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to approve the water pressure complaint policy and procedure form. Treasurer Keith Ariail seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Waddell presented a new contract for customers to sign. Some customers do not receive their bills, therefore do not pay for water service. On our bills it states that failure to receive bill does not relieve obligation. Manager Waddell stated that he had Attorney Hulseby incorporate that statement in the contract so that if a customer does not receive their bill, they have still signed a contract of obligation. The new contract is a 6 x 9 card, which will simplify book keeping and the filing system. The customer will receive a contract when they sign the card.

Treasurer Keith Ariail made a motion to approve the new water subscription contract and card filing system. Board Member Elton Collins seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Waddell presented the Accounts Receivable report. He made a recommendation to write off all accounts that are 1996 or older.

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to write off bad debt for the years 1991 through 1996. Also, going forward, charge off the third year back

for bad debt during that year. Treasurer Keith Ariail seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Manager Waddell asked for guidance from the board concerning the City of Arcade Hidden Oaks payment. Chairman Bryan recommended that we contact them and ask them to let us know where they stand. Manager Waddell stated that he would ask them to attend the next board meeting to update us on the remaining \$ 25, 0000 still owed. Manager Waddell also reported that he has contacted Joe Tanner who does consultant work for us and asked him to talk to EPD to get the \$ 64,000.00 that was obligated to us by the EPD.

Manager Waddell reported that Engineer Armentrout sent letters to all the contractors who work for us relating to material pick-up. The letter states they must call ahead on small orders and fax a list on large orders. This will help with inventory control.

Manager Waddell reported that Allen, Smith Consulting submitted a proposal for \$3,000.00 to oversee and write the application for the CDBG grant.

Board Member Elton Collins made a motion that contingent upon the presentation of Allen, Smith Consulting and the Jackson County Board of Commissioner's approval, to allow Manager Waddell and staff to apply for the CDBG grant. Secretary Larry Wood seconded the motion and the motion carried.

#### **WATER ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Engineer Armentrout presented a schedule for SPLOST 3, 4, and 5. The schedule includes projected expenditures for each project. The total for all three projects is 3.4 million dollars. Engineer Armentrout recommended that SPLOST project 5 be pushed up to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2002. He recommended to watch the SPLOST revenue and adjust the schedule accordingly.

Engineer Armentrout reported that on Hwy. 60 and Pocket Road, we have a need for an easement to go to the pump station site that will be serving Braselton and the upper end of Hwy. 60. Mr. Carlyle who owns the property would like for the water lines to be to the back of the property line. Engineer Armentrout proposed that we obtain this easement for our two waterlines by having the County trade right - of - way in order to do so.

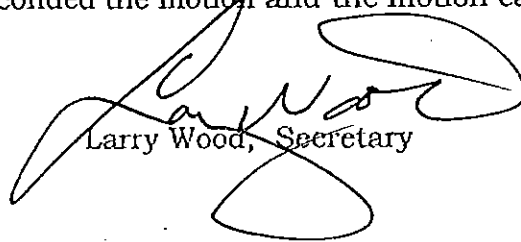
Board Member Elton Collins made a motion to allow Manager Waddell and Engineer Armentrout to proceed in getting the easement on Pocket Road and proceed to talk to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners to get their approval concerning the right-of-way. Treasurer Keith Ariail seconded the motion and the motion carried.

#### **SEWER ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Engineer Sutton reported that he has received a letter from EPD regarding the DDR on the plant. He will reply to the letter to get that finalized. He has also met with Mr. Sealey, with the City of Jefferson, in an effort to get a line worked out so we can cut the Texfi line off and send it through their system. He has requested J & K Utilites to give him a price on extending the line 148 feet. Engineer Sutton recommended that the Authority accept the contractor's price.

Treasurer Keith Ariail made a motion to accept the recommendation of Engineer Sutton regarding the quote from J & K Utilities. Board Member Elton Collins seconded the motion and the motion carried.

There being no further business, Secretary Larry Wood made a motion to adjourn, Treasurer Keith Airail seconded the motion and the motion carried.



Larry Wood, Secretary