

Fellow CPW customers

We would like to start by saying we apologize for the poor communication that has taken place. We recognize that we could have communicated the issue with billing and reading of the meters in a better and faster way to you.

Several months ago, Commissioner Cooper requested a monthly report that showed the amount of water our pumps have pumped vs how much water we billed. The first month showed a large discrepancy as well as the second month. After the second month that same board member requested a copy of our monthly billing manifest. On this manifest it was found that we had almost 800 accounts that was showing zero usage for the month. Chairman Cooper then requested the manifest from the previous month to compare the accounts and it too was found with almost 800 accounts showing zero usage.

At the next CPW meeting it was discussed with our office manager these findings since he was responsible for reading the meters and our billing. He was asked about the re-read sheet and work orders that should get created when these discrepancies show up on the billing and we were told they were not being made. At this meeting we requested that he create a monthly re-read sheet for any accounts showing zero usage and from that step, if needed create work orders to make the needed repairs. We also asked for other measures to be put in place at that time to track these accounts. Shortly after this meeting our office manager decided to retire.

From October of 2019 until now we have been working to define the problems we have. It has taken several months to go through our whole system and have a good understanding of just how big of an issue we have. We found several meters that needed to be repaired, meters that need replaced, as well as some we had to find that were covered up by grass, overgrown shrubs, and landscaping such as mulch and Pine straw. During these months we too had to send out some flat rate billing due to it taking such a long time to get through the whole system. Once we read all the meters in question, we then put that correct reading in our system creating a new and accurate baseline for billing. At this point we had to make adjustments to bills. We felt it was our loss and we could not send out a bill that would have basically been charging you for all the water you may have used but not been billed for.

We have since created a manual read list that we will continue to do until all of the meters on the list are repaired or replaced. To date we have replaced over 250 meters at a cost of over \$50,000 and we have hired extra help to assist with reading the meters, repairing them, or replacing.

In the past two months we have had accurate reading of the meters and that has led to larger than normal bills for some of you. In the same time, we have responded to multiple complaints with each one being answered and proven that the billing was correct. We understand that many of you have paid the flat bill for months if not years and you were not aware of the issues we were having internally until you received a bill that was more than normal, for this again we apologize but rest assured we are doing everything we can as fast as we can to remedy the problem.

We ask for your understanding and your patience in this matter as we continue to work to resolve the issues at hand.

New Ellenton CPW Chairman,

Roy H. Shaw