



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
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July 15, 2019

Shari Tessmer
o/b/o Gertrude Seigler
18 Villa Ravenna
Lake Elsinore, CA 92532-0120

Emailed to: tohealthierliving@gmail.com

RE: 2389 Schadt Drive Water Bill Appeal

Dear Ms. Tessmer:

At the Legislative Hearing on June 25, 2019, you appealed the September 19, 2018 bill of \$550.14 for water services at 2389 Schadt Drive. The stated reason for the appeal was that you believed the water should have been shut off after the unpaid April bill exceeded \$150. You indicated Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) Customer Service staff had told you this was the policy. I have located the policy for shut-off of water services at a property for an unpaid balance in excess of \$150 in the SPRWS Collection Process Business Plan. You indicated you relied on this policy to prevent the bill from increasing, as the unpaid portion becomes your responsibility as the landlord.

SPRWS records indicate they became aware of the problem of locating the stop-cock/stop box (stop) for your property in January 2018, following notification for an impending shut-off which was averted when the account was paid. I investigated SPRWS practices when they are not able to locate the stop-cock (stop) within the boulevard area, as was the case with your mother's property. The stop itself is located 7-8 feet underground and it is found at the bottom of a riser pipe (conduit) which has a clear access point at ground level – with a box and cover. If a stop is difficult for staff to find, it is almost always the case that the equipment has been compromised. This compromised condition could be because the stop became buried as the result of landscaping or other earth moving. The equipment also could have become damaged, as a result of a gas line installation bending the box itself or some other occurrence. Therefore, the question becomes not one of "finding" the stop, but rather excavating to gain access to it. There are cases where it is an emergency and necessary to do this type of excavation. However, nonpayment shut-offs with no other complicating factors do not constitute an emergency for SPRWS and this type of case becomes a non-emergency work order.

It is not clear to me that it was communicated to you that in the case SPRWS was unable to shut off the flow of water at the stop, you would still be responsible for water service bill. In point of fact you are, per the Saint Paul Legislative Code. In this type of situation, the account holder, in your case the tenant receives all the notifications, up to the termination notice September 18, 2019. Water usage would not have occurred, or the account would have been brought current, had the shut-off happened as a result of the unpaid balance in July.

Therefore, I am recommending that the SPRWS Board of Commissioners reduce the amount owed on your account from the ending balance on September 19, 2018 of \$550.14 to the balance on May 30, 2018 of \$183.23. This reduction reflects what would have been owed on the account if a shut-due to non-payment of the April 2018 bill, which exceeded \$150 and therefore would have triggered a shut-off. This is a summary of the pertinent account information:

Transaction Date	Transaction	Transaction Amount	Balance	Moermond Comments
9/19/2018	Auto Final Bill Due: 10/4/2018	\$148.63	\$550.14	Delete \$148.63
9/3/2018	Late Charge - Quarterly	\$10.39	\$401.51	Delete \$10.39
7/30/2018	Cycle Billing Due: 8/14/2018	\$207.89	\$391.12	Delete \$207.89
5/30/2018	Late Charge - Quarterly	\$8.73	\$183.23	Approve \$8.73
4/27/2018	Cycle Billing Due: 5/12/2018	\$174.50	\$174.50	Approve \$174.50

Should you wish to appeal this matter further, it will be scheduled for consideration by the SPRWS Board of Commissioners on **August 13, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 330 City Hall.**

Please contact Mai Vang at 651-266-8563 or mai.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us if you plan on attending this meeting or if you have other questions.

Sincerely,

Marcia Moermond

Marcia Moermond
Legislative Hearing Officer

c: Steve Schneider, SPRWS General Manager
Dolly Ludden, SPRWS Business Manager