

Date: This is for every time I get a garbage bill.

To: All who played a part in setting up this current Garbage Situation, including persons on the city council, Melvin Carter, Chris Swanson, etc.

From: Mary Konsela

This letter will be fairly short because I've become worn out with thinking and talking and feeling bad about this devastating and poorly planned situation with the garbage.

I am a person who aimed at ZERO GARBAGE for many years, mainly because I want to do my small part to keep our earth and things out of landfills. I recycle everything I can, I compost organic waste and buy only things which are minimally packaged in recyclable materials. It has become a value for me and a natural part of my lifestyle. I've succeeded in keeping the waste I produce to a very miniscule amount. There is very little which can't be recycled or composted. That amount of garbage I make would fill 30 gallons in three months! What would I put in it??? The reality is, it may fill a container about the size of a pint, sometimes less or more.

I value leaving a small footprint on the earth. I've grown up with the injunction from my mother, "Don't waste". I've taken that to heart and have developed a lifestyle in which I live simply and frugally, meaning I don't waste things and I don't buy what I don't need. I am NOT a big consumer.

What supports this lifestyle is that I've worked in the field of Human Services, which did not always pay me adequately, but provided a limited income. I'm retired now and the income is definitely limited. I've cut things to live within my means.

The bill of \$60. for garbage every three months is enormous! It is WAY more than I need or can afford. I need to have services commensurate with my needs, not dictated to me by a department of government which made a one-decision-fits-all, with no thought for individual needs. How should I handle this?

I cannot possibly make 30 gallons of garbage in 3 months !!! What would I put into it? I want you to take these comments seriously. I DO NOT WANT TO BUY THIS SERVICE BECAUSE I DON'T NEED IT. Please consider this.

I've talked with a few people who say they are helpless because the city signed a contract with a company and it can't change it. I don't want to be paying \$60. for years because I'm old now and I don't want to waste money buying a service I don't need.

I'm aware that besides me, many people are dissatisfied with this service which was arranged by people who apparently don't know the constituents' needs, yet dictate "solutions/plans" that don't work well. My suggestion is for the city to be aware of the many people for whom this arrangement is not "a fit," and CALL A HALT TO THIS "CONTRACT"! Admit they made a mistake!! And make changes so the

services they offer actually meet what people need. You don't have to wait for one more day, certainly not years. At near 80, I don't want to pay for what I don't want until I'm 80 years old, or older. It makes me want to cry to spend money this way, after I've worked hard to pare down and meet my needs in ways that fit within my income. Paying this is like making a donation to the city! How and when will the city reimburse me for the \$60. I've been paying for nothing??? I hope soon. I can't afford this.

Lastly, I was astounded and felt some shame that I, as a very private and old person with a quite limited income, credit rating 800 for many years, would find myself receiving punitive letters from the city, about arrangements to be made with 4-6 public officials at "hearings" to be on a specific day and time, to sit with me at the phone (for how long?) to talk about a late fee of \$2.88. How do I warrant having a collection of city officials spend a sum of hours (how many?) with me (with me!!!)

Please note: All of this is going on while our larger government is in shambles! Literally! And the neighborhoods, the country and the world are in the new and confining experience of lockdown, which for many means the stress of isolation. I felt shocked that all that time would be spent on me while I was certain there were many people who actually could have used some help during this time. I'd like to have seen the public servants of St. Paul send mailings of encouragement to people, better yet, go out personally door to door as they did when they campaigned, to visit and check on people—making an effort of good will. That would have been time well spent as many people were in a state of hardship: loss of job, lack of money, no transportation, food needs, and much more. Encouraging words would have been welcome and useful for many, especially for people for whom all kinds of relationships were stressed and difficult during this lengthy and complete confinement.

The time and energy spent on this garbage issue was an added stress and felt out of focus for me. I felt conspicuous and shamed, knowing there were very many other people with serious needs that should have taken priority. Some creative thinking and planning was needed to find the best use of the time and use of the human power (aka manpower) of the city servants during this time of pervasive human need.

My own need is to not be coerced with threats to my home, to force payment for a service I don't need. This is not justice. This is not reasonable. This is not people oriented service. I don't want to tighten my belt and go without things to pay for something I don't need. Additionally, there are other issues that others have regarding the current garbage situation that have to do with ethics, legality and just plain common sense that I'm not addressing in this document. For me I address today, the issue that I can't be paying for something out of proportion to my needs as that is unaffordable for me.

Please be aware of others who feel as I do—that this plan/arrangement is not working for them. They may have said something once, but if they don't say it again, please, please don't think the issue went away! They simply don't have the time to speak up each time the bill comes when they feel the unfairness and injustice all over again. And some people feel powerless and don't speak up at all.

Thank you for taking this to heart. It is very important.

Sincerely,

Mary Konsela