

Sharon L. Karas  
1865 Margaret St.  
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City of St. Paul/Public Works

July 22, 2019

RE: Dispute of delinquent fee for Garbage bill/File #CG1902C1

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to a Public Hearing Notice I received for a late fee charged in January 2019 that if left unpaid will eventually be attached to my property tax. It isn't the amount, it is the principal of the whole billing process in this new system. My bill was paid on February 1st in full, per the statement received in mid-January. This is when I receive my pension funds for the month. I am retired, on a fixed income. Other citizens must also have this same issue.

Back in October 2018, I received the new bill for Republic Services (having just paid the final bill from my previous vendor that same month). The bill had a due date of October 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>. I paid my bill on November 1<sup>st</sup>. When I received the first Notice of Non-Payment, they'd already cashed my check, of course. I checked. I contacted the company who said they would refund that late fee, and that fee only. Later when I read the bill again, I realized a couple of things. Even though the statement itself had an invoice date of October 4<sup>th</sup>, it never arrived until mid-month. I had approximately 10 days notice to pay that bill. Again, knowing exactly when my money arrives and what I need to pay, I had just assumed, as with the previous vendor, there was a grace period. However, when I contacted Republic Services again for clarification, I was informed that the bill is due ON THAT DUE DATE. If not received by that day, a late fee is automatically charged. I spoke with another company representative at that time and was informed that there were no exceptions. I wasn't allowed to adjust the due date to accommodate my needs. I tried calling the city but was told that this is a matter for the vendor. At that point, I just let it go.

In January, 2019 the same issue occurred. The January bill had an invoice date of January 4<sup>th</sup> but arrived mid-January. I paid my bill on February 1<sup>st</sup> and almost immediately I received a notice that I owed a late fee. Again, by this time, they had already cashed my check. I called Republic Services on February 12<sup>th</sup>. They said it wasn't their rule, but they don't change due dates for anyone. They referred me to the City of St. Paul. I contacted the City and explained the situation. They said it wasn't up to them, and to call Republic Services. No one made any effort to problem solve. I did attempt to contact my

City Council representative, but, frankly, I had other things to do and decided not to continue to pursue the issue. But I also refused to pay that late fee.

Since that time, interest has been added to the fee. I would venture a guess that between Republic Services and the City of St. Paul, between the time spent on this paltry amount of money and the paperwork, your costs are now 10 or 20 times the cost of this ridiculous late fee. Having a policy where changes to due dates cannot be made OR not having a grace period is just absolutely lacking in good customer service. I have never worked with any company from Verizon to my credit union to my mortgage company and others where accommodations are not made. What is the problem here?

I like the new system of trash hauling taking place one time a week. It is noticeably quieter in my neighborhood. But to have such intransigent policies, it is just not appropriate. And certainly not good customer service.

I wish to have this late fee and the accumulating interest costs rescinded.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Karas