

LEHIGH COUNTY AUTHORITY
WORKSHOP AGENDA
Monday, October 13, 2014 – 12:00 PM

INITIAL ITEMS *(Collectively 5 Minutes)*

1. **Identify items for October Board Meeting**

- *Review Board Discussion items, October 2014 – December 2014*

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. **Customer Billing Dispute**

A customer from the Authority's Allentown Division is planning to attend the workshop meeting to address the Board regarding an ongoing bill dispute. Details are provided in the attached memo (*ivory*).

2. **2015-2024 Capital Plan Presentation**

An overview of both the Suburban and Allentown Division Capital Plans will be presented with copies of each Plan distributed at the meeting.

3. **Sanitary Sewer System Flow Metering for LCA (Approval)**

A recommendation for award of a flow metering contract will be presented to the Board for consideration.

4. **Wastewater Capacity/537 Plan Update**

The 537 Team will present an update to the Board regarding the 537 Plan Study currently underway. The previous update concentrated on the option to discharge to the Jordon Creek. This presentation will focus on the land application alternative and will touch on the 537 planning, DRBC effluent requirements, and conveyance modeling.

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. ***None.***

OTHER ITEMS

1. ***None.***

**BOARD ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS
OCTOBER 2014 – NOVEMBER 2014**

PRIORITY*	PROJECT/ISSUE	TYPE OF ACTION	TIMING**
	<i>AS NEEDED</i>		
H	Acquisition/Growth Strategy Activities	Status Report	As needed
L	Jordan Creek Wastewater Plant	Status Report	As needed
M	Strawberry Acres – AARC - Sewer System	Status Report	As needed
H	Strategic Plan Update	Status Report	As needed
	<i>WITHIN 45 DAYS</i>		
H	Sanitary Sewer System Flow Metering for LCA	Approval	October (W)
H	Allentown Division- Sanitary Sewer Manhole Collars & Water Tight Covers, Construction Phase	Approval	October (B)
H	Wynnewood Terrace Pump Station & Force Main Replacement- Construction phase	Approval	October (B)
H	Preliminary Capital Plan	Discussion	October (W)
	Drug & Alcohol Policy	Approval	October (B)
M	Hydro-Pneumatic Pump Station Upgrade (Pine Lakes of Lynn), Design Phase	Approval	November (B)
H	Allentown Division- WWTP Motor Control Centers, Construction Phase	Approval	November (W)
H	Capital Plan	Approval	November (B)
	<i>WITHIN 75 DAYS</i>		

* **H – High**
M – Medium
L – Low

** **(W) – Workshop**
(B) – Board
(W/B) - Either



Lehigh County Authority

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 7, 2014

To: LCA Board of Directors
From: Liesel Adam, Chief Administrative Officer
Re: Customer Bill Dispute
James Shen – 389 Liberty Street, Allentown

On April 15, 2014, Lehigh County Authority issued a water and sewer bill to Mr. Shen for the period of 12/23/2013 to 4/1/2014. The bill was in the amount of \$2,536.90, due to very high metered water usage in the amount of 461,320 gallons for the billing period noted above. Mr. Shen's normal usage would range from about 8,000 to 22,000 gallons per quarter, for an average bill of about \$120 per quarter.

This high bill follows plumbing work completed at the property in February and March 2014, as evidenced by a request for LCA service technicians to turn water off at the property to allow for repairs that began on 2/28/2014 and were completed on 3/14/2014.

After the high bill was issued in April 2014, LCA confirmed water usage had returned to normal and the high bill was suspected to be caused by a plumbing leak that had been repaired the month prior. LCA's standard procedures for a high bill would include investigating as necessary to determine any malfunction with the water meter, if suspected, and communication with the customer to determine if payment arrangements would be required to allow for full payment on a timely basis. In some cases, small adjustments to the bill amount would be offered to assist the customer in paying the balance in a timely manner. In this case, because the customer admitted to having a leak at the property, and usage had returned to normal following the repair, no meter investigation was conducted.

In addition, LCA technicians are often dispatched to visit the property to determine the location of any leaks that may have caused the high water bill, and to make a determination if the leaked water would have entered the sanitary sewer lines. In cases where the technician is certain the water would not have entered the sanitary sewer line, additional bill adjustments may be offered to discount the sewer flow charges on the customer's bill.

On June 30, 2014, LCA's technician visited the property and reviewed the location of the leak that was repaired in March 2014. According to his assessment, the leak site was no longer visible because the leak had occurred between wall panels that had since been closed and finished. LCA's technician reported that based on the location of the leak, he expected the leaked water to flow to the sanitary sewer line and no sewer bill adjustment should be provided.

On July 14, 2014, Mr. Shen submitted a letter and statement from his plumber asserting that the leaked water actually flowed to the back yard and not into the sanitary sewer line. This documentation is attached.

Based on the information provided, and numerous subsequent conversations and correspondence with Mr. Shen, the following conclusions were made and actions take to attempt to resolve the situation:

- The documentation provided by the plumber is not adequate to clearly demonstrate where the leaked water would have flowed to, or what repairs were made to address the leak and structural damage. LCA would typically require photo documentation and/or a detailed invoice from a plumber showing details of work that was completed in order to validate such a claim.
- Mr. Shen's plumber stated that "a lot of water flowed to the back yard" but did not quantify this amount, nor did he certify that no water could have entered the sanitary sewer line. Based on the high volume of water lost (461,320 gallons), LCA staff had concluded that this volume of water would have been noticeable if it had flowed to the back yard. Therefore, based on field inspection, LCA staff concluded that the majority of the water had likely flowed to the sanitary sewer line via a nearby bathroom drain.
- LCA has waived \$178.93 in penalties that had accrued on the account due to non-payment.
- LCA offered an additional discount of \$200.00 toward the sewer portion of the bill, to assist the customer in reducing the bill amount and accounting for some possibility that some of the leaked water may not have entered the sanitary sewer line.
- LCA provided written guidance to Mr. Shen regarding LCA's bill dispute procedures, including a requirement that the bill be paid in full.

On August 28, 2014, Mr. Shen paid the remaining balance on the bill in question and requested a hearing with LCA's Board of Directors to resolve the bill dispute. He contends that the sewer portion of the bill should be waived based on his plumber's statement that the leaked water did not enter the sanitary sewer line.

The charge in question on Mr. Shen's bill includes:

Sewer Flow Charge	\$1,032.27
MINUS Normal Charge	- 33.60
<u>MINUS Adjustment Provided</u>	<u>- 200.00</u>
Remaining Amount Under Dispute	\$ 798.67

Mr. Shen currently resides outside the country and is only available for a meeting with LCA's Board at its October 13, 2014 workshop meeting. Therefore, he intends to attend this meeting in order to review his dispute.

Should you require any additional details about this bill dispute, please contact Liesel Adam at lieseladam@lehighcountyauthority.org. Thank you.

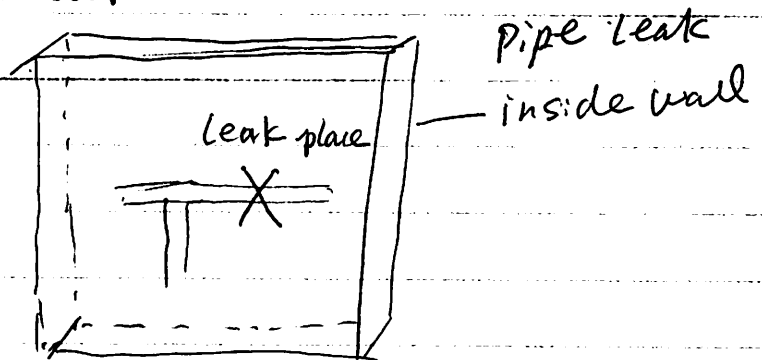
July 13, 2014

Ref. 389 Liberty St. Allentown PA 18102

To Whom it may Concern:

I am Jian Yang & is a plumber. On ~~March~~ March 17th, 14, I did check pipes in terms of owner, James Shen requestant.

The leak pipe located inside wall in first floor, ^(See Pg) when I did check, a lot of water flow out to back yard through holes in back wall, & there are water deposit inside wall, & part wall was collapsed. I made all water flow out into back yard, repaired pipe & collapsed wall.



I declare the statement is true & correct to the best of my knowledge & belief, I understand false statements herein are made subject to the penalties.

Yang, Jian.

Account # 44897, Service to 389 Liberty St Allentown PA 18102

Dear Mrs Wendy Seidel,

The water bill in period of 12/26/13-4/01/14 show \$2786.50.
Due to tenant made accident that ~~the~~ water leak from pipe inside wall, the leak water flow to back yard & did not go to sewer. On 6/30/14, your people came to the property & did check. Due to language barrier, he misunderstood my description. Because the collapsed wall already repaired, he can not see the leak pipes inside wall, he guess the leak water flow to bathroom sewer. In fact, leak water pipes located inside wall, & leak water flow to back yard.

Please see enclosed plumber Yang's statement, he ^{repaired} ~~did~~ pipes & wall. ~~repairment~~

Mrs. Seidel, I hope you adjust the bill amount based on fact ~~of~~ that the leak water did not go to sewer,

Thanks

James Shen

7/14/2014