

QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CONSUMER ADVOCATE

JANUARY 1-MARCH 31, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Below is a description of the issues which have required attention this quarter. It should be noted that the MDC has an active committee structure. Since much of the work is accomplished at the committee level, it has been necessary to prepare for and attend all such meetings in addition to the monthly District Board meeting. Attendance at these meetings has all been electronic and does consume a fair amount of time.

CUSTOMER ISSUES

There were only two consumers who raised individual questions this quarter. However, there were several issues raised by consumers which involved groups. There was a sewer overflow incident in Newington which affected more than ten houses. Several of those homeowners contacted me as well as a member of the General Assembly. There was substantial communication with MDC regarding causes, liability, and preventative measures that could be taken to avoid future overflows. In addition two groups of customers contacted the ICA regarding situations where more than one customer shared service from a service pipe/main. These customers wanted separate service from MDC. Both of these situations had existed for many years. The Glastonbury settlement and the communication from the Administrator of the settlement fund resulted in two customer inquiries regarding the calculation of the amount of the settlement they were each due. This required research into the terms of the settlement.

CWPC/RATE STABILIZATION FUND

The Clean Water Project Charge(CWPC) constitutes approximately one-half of a customer bill. While the charge has remained flat for two years, it is projected by MDC to increase in future years. To gain a better understanding of how this charge is calculated and how the Rate Stabilization Fund(RSF) is being utilized, research was undertaken. This included reviewing bond documents, correspondence with MDC regarding uses of the RSF, and review of the status of the Integrated Resource Plan pending at the DEEP. While the CWPC has been characterized as an 'automatic' calculation, this has not proven to be the case and requires a fair amount of judgment to be determined each year. This work will continue in the second quarter.

RESERVOIR ACCESS

Several homeowners near the West Hartford Reservoir contacted the ICA regarding the increased activity at the Reservoir during the pandemic. Some of this activity spilled onto nearby properties/roads. Not surprisingly, some homeowners thought the increased activity and some

inconvenience to nearby residents was justified and others felt to the contrary. As the weather improves, these controversies may become more prevalent.

MISCELLANEOUS

The MDC has compiled several operational policies and procedural manuals primarily in the Finance area. These manuals will be helpful going forward to make sure that matters are being comprehensively addressed. The ICA reviewed these documents and pointed out what he believed to be two substantial omissions—absence of discussion of the sewer customer service charge and absence of the aforementioned CWPC. The first of these is responsible for approximately \$7million of revenue and the latter approximately \$60 million. Neither has been incorporated into the manuals.

Finally, there was some legislation proposed regarding the MDC which was reviewed by the MDC. Several conversations with consumers, municipal officials, and the MDC occurred.

[PLEASE NOTE : As of the preparation of this quarterly report, quarterly reports for 2020 have not been issued due to technology issues and the inability to resolve these during the pandemic. The 2020 reports will be issued within 60 days.]

Respectfully Submitted

Independent Consumer Advocate

By David Silverstone

April 6, 2021