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October 13, 2020

Ms. Luly Massaro, Clerk  
Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities  
and Carriers  
89 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, RI 02888

***Re: The City of Newport, Utilities Department, Water Division - Docket 5022***  
***In Re: Suspension Of Service Terminations And***  
***Certain Collection Activities During The COVID-19 Emergency***

Dear Ms. Massaro:

Enclosed herewith please find an original and nine copies of Newport Water's Response to the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission's Data Requests On The Quantification of Waived Fees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Keough, Jr.

Enclosures  
cc: Service List via electronic mail

**Docket 5022**  
**PUC Data Requests on the Quantifications of Waived Fees**  
**September 22, 2020**

Newport Water Division Responses

**DR1:** Does the Newport Water Division (NWD) typically charge late fees to customers? If so, please provide the tariff reference and the types of customers to whom the late fee applies

**RESPONSE:** The NWD does not charge late fees to customers.

**DR-2:** Does the NWD typically charge interest on overdue balances to customers? If so, please provide the tariff reference and the types of customers to whom the interest charge applies.

**RESPONSE:** NWD charges interest on all delinquent accounts at a rate of 18% per annum. The interest charge was established in the Tariffs for Docket 4025, effective July 1, 2009.

**DR-3:** Does the NWD typically pass through to the user the so called “convenience fees” associated with paying with credit cards or debit cards?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, transaction fees are passed through to the user when paying with credit cards or debit cards. Payments by credit cards and debit cards are made by our customers using RIeGov. The processing center charges 3% of the amount charged.

**DR-4:** Does the NWD typically pass through to the user the so called “convenience fees” associated with paying with an ACH/electronic check?

**RESPONSE:** There are no fees passed through to the customer when paying with an ACH/electronic check.

**DR-5:** Does the NWD intend to seek recovery of the costs associated with the absorption of the applicable fees?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

**DR-6:** Please indicate the date upon which NWD ceased charging customers for late fees, interest fees, credit card/debit card payment fees, or ACH/check fees (please list each separately, even if the date is the same) as a result of the Commission’s decision.

**RESPONSE:** The NWD stopped charging/accruing interest on past due accounts as of May 1, 2020. Newport began absorbing the transaction fee for credit/debit card payments as of July 1, 2020.

**DR-7:** Utilities only collect late fees and interest fees on accounts for which payments are made. Similarly, credit card/debit card fees and ACH/electronic check fees are only absorbed by the utility under the PUC's order if payments are made. For the period commencing on the date provided in response to number 6 through the most recent date available (identify the date), please provide the following:

- a. The total number of accounts on which payments were made.
- b. The number of accounts where payments were made and interest and/or late fees were waived.
- c. The number of accounts where payments were made by credit card/debit card.
- d. The number of accounts where payments were made by ACH/electronic check.
- e. The dollar amount of credit card/debit card fees absorbed by the utility that would have otherwise been assessed to the customer paying with a credit card/debit card.
- f. The dollar amount of ACH/electronic check absorbed by the utility that would have otherwise been assessed to the customer paying through ACH/electronic check.
- g. The dollar amount of waived late fees on accounts where payments were made.
- h. The dollar amount of waived interest fees on accounts where payments were made.

**RESPONSE:**

- a. 70,021 accounts made payments between May 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020.
- b. NWD's billing software would not allow us to calculate interest and then waive it. Thus, we had to "turn off" the calculation of interest when preparing bills. Had interest been calculated, it would have shown on our customers' bills.
- c. 3,008 accounts made payments by credit/debit cards between July 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020
- d. 5,732 accounts made ACH payments between July 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020
- e. NWD absorbed \$14,750.02 in transaction fees on credit/debit card payments for the period July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020.
- f. N/A
- g. N/A
- h. As set forth in subsection b., we had to "turn off" the calculation of interest to comply with the Commission's order. Therefore, NWD does not have this information. However, the 3 year average for interest collected from May through September is \$17,936.08. In 2020 NWD collected \$4,005.54 in interest charges for the period May 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup> which is interest that existed on accounts prior to the April 1, 2020 billings.

	Interest Collected
May 1- Sept 30, 2017	\$20,182.68
May 1- Sept 30, 2018	\$20,427.90
May 1- Sept 30, 2019	\$13,197.67
<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>\$17,936.08</b>

**DR-8:** Please indicate the first date the Newport Water Division sent termination notices to customers with dates not affected by a Commission decision (in other words, the utility could follow through with a physical termination on or after the notice period if payment or a payment arrangement was not made). Please break out by customer class if applicable

**RESPONSE:** The Newport Water Division issued delinquent notices in groups to customers who had a 90+ day past due balance of \$675 or greater on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. The notices required payment in full or an executed payment plan to avoid termination of service. As a result of the non-responses, Notices of Termination cards were mailed as follows:

Date Mailed	Termination date	Residential	Non-Residential	TOTAL
September 28th	October 14	21	2	23
October 2	October 21	6		6
October 6	October 28	16	1	17