



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: November 30, 2010
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Subject: **Ordinance Amendment – Meter Reading Requirements**

Recommendation:
Adopt amended ordinance.

Previous Directives:
None

Prepared by: Brette Hjelle, Public Works Interagency Coordinator

Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Brette Hjelle, Public Works Interagency Coordinator

Reviews

Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval _NA_ Date __
Civil Rights Approval Approval _NA_ Date __
Policy Review Group (PRG): Approval _NA_ Date __

Financial Impact

Within Departmental Budget

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: NA
City Goals: A City that Works
Comprehensive Plan: NA
Zoning Code: NA

Background/Supporting Information

Public Works is recommending amending Title 19, Chapter 509 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Meter reading (changes to meter reading procedures).

The purpose of the recommended amended ordinance language is to shorten the amount of time a water meter cannot be read. A basic principle supporting this ordinance change is estimated meter readings are not good for the customer or the city.

Water meters in Minneapolis are read one of two ways – via the telephone over a land line or via radio frequency to a city vehicle on the street. Public Works has experienced an increase in estimated water bills as more properties disconnect their land line and rely on cellular service or other technologies for their telephone needs.

Water bills are often the first indication that a customer has a water leak in their property and estimated readings will not bring the leak to their attention until a potentially large water bill is accrued. For the city, it is sound business practice for a utility to have accurate information about where and how much water is being used by its customers.

Summary of Changes

Under the current ordinance, the city is required to attempt to read water meters once every three months. If a reading cannot be made, the bill may be estimated or the resident may provide the reading. The customer is obligated by the current ordinance to allow the city to read the meter once every twelve months, when there is a change in customer, or when requested by the customer.

The proposed amendment to the ordinance will require the city to attempt to read meters every month. Customers will be obligated to give the city access to the meter if a meter reading cannot be made for three months and there will no longer be a provision for customers to provide readings.