

From: Sharon Water Supply Corporation Board of Directors

To: Sharon WSC Members

It has been brought to our attention that there was an extensive issue regarding the delivery of our member's water bills during the month of July. As we understand it, this problem affected the entirety of our Membership and was not isolated to one single area. The delay in delivery of our bills was the same between towns, counties, and multiple states. Simply put, everyone received their bills late.

Before discussing the outcome of our inquiry into the matter, we feel that it is important to let you, our fellow member, know what we've been made to believe about the handling of bulk mail and how it relates to your water bill. According to the Postmaster at the Winnsboro USPS office, mail received at the local offices are now being taken to a USPS Distribution Center to be sorted by machine. When mail, like our billing, is dropped off at the USPS office in Winnsboro, it is sent to the Distribution Center in Coppell, Texas for sorting, then sent out to the local USPS offices for delivery to your mailbox. It is possible that mail delivered to a different local USPS office is sorted at a different location.

While investigating the cause of the delay, we were assured that our bulk mail delivery was handled properly by the USPS office in Winnsboro and was sent to the Coppell Distribution Center in a timely manner. From our research, the Distribution Center is where the delay occurred as the bills were not shipped back to the local USPS Offices to be delivered for quite some time. Once the bills were received at the local Post Offices, they were promptly delivered to our members.

As a whole, the Sharon WSC Board of Directors understands the frustration felt by the large majority of our Membership regarding this issue. We find it equally frustrating, as we are relying on the USPS to provide quality and timely service that we simply did not receive during the July billing period. Because of this issue, we decided to create this mailout to better inform our members about our billing procedures, significant recurring dates, payment options, and the information available on our website.

- **Billing** – As most of you are aware, we bill a month behind. As an example, we will use the billing cycle for October 2021. The water bill you should receive in the first week of October is for metered consumption between August 10<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup>, approximately. Our first billing, which is the green bill you receive, is usually created on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last day of the month. October's billing will be created and delivered to the Winnsboro USPS office on September 29<sup>th</sup>. The Sharon WSC Tariff states that bills are considered late if they are not paid by the due date listed on the bill, which is approximately fifteen days after they are mailed. Ensuring that your bill is paid on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month will prevent any late fees from being added to your account.

- Significant Recurring Dates – Because our office is closed on the weekends, these dates are approximated due to the weekday that they might happen to fall on. In the event that the dates below are a Saturday, Sunday, or national holiday, the associated actions will take place on the following business day.
  - First Billing (Green) – Created & mailed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last day of the month
  - Last Day to Pay – The 15<sup>th</sup> of every month, approximately
  - Second Billing (Red) – Late Notices (\$15.00 fee) - Created & Mailed on the 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Lock Day – Disconnect for non-payment (\$100 fee) – 10 days after Second Billing
  - Meter Reading – Our staff begins meter reading approximately on the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month
  
- Payment Options – Sharon WSC offers many options when it comes to paying your bill.
  - Cash, check, money order, or credit/debit card at the Sharon WSC office drive through or night drop for after-hours payments.
  - Check or money order by mail.
  - Credit or Debit card by phone by dialing 1-844-571-2891. You will need your account number and previous payment amount. Please note that there is a \$1.70 transaction fee for using the pay-by-phone system.
  - Credit or Debit card through our website with two easy options –
    - Quick Pay - You will need your account number and last payment amount.
    - Create an Account – You will need your account number and last payment amount. Creating an account will allow you to review your account information, previous transactions, consumption details, and allow you to enable email notifications for balance changes on your account. Please note that there is a \$1.20 transaction fee for using our online payment system.
  - Online Auto Pay – After you've created an account through our website, you can enter your credit/debit card information to have your bill automatically paid on a date that you choose. Keep in mind that the due date is the 15<sup>th</sup>, so selecting a date after that will subject the account to late and/or lock fees. Please note that the \$1.20 transaction fee applies to all online payments.
  - Bank Draft – Completed by our office staff on the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month, at no charge. To set up your account on bank draft, our office will need a bank draft form completed and signed, along with a voided check.
  - Online Banking through your bank – Please be aware that, if you choose to make your payment through your bank, that the balance on your account is not paid on the same date. Many members are unaware that when using online banking, even though the funds are withdrawn from your account immediately, the funds are sent to a check writing firm who writes a physical check and sends

it through the USPS mail to our office. The balance of your account remains unpaid until the check is received at our office, which could take multiple days and subject the account to late and/or lock fees.

- Information Available on our Website – Our members can find necessary forms, rates and policies, meter reading information, bill payment information, and other useful tools by visiting our website at [www.sharon-water.com](http://www.sharon-water.com). Under the Customer Service tab, members will find a link to our annual calendar. This calendar contains the relevant dates discussed above and more.
- Also, by clicking the green “BILL PAYMENT” link on the home screen, followed by the green “Pay Your Bill Now”, you will be taken to our online payment site. After creating your account, you will have access to your Utility Billing Homepage. From there, you can pay your bill, schedule payments, enable email notifications about your account, review your transaction and consumption history, and send an email to our office staff regarding your service.
- In addition to these features, our office staff has successfully added an option to view and print your current bill from the website. Under the “Transactions” tab, you are also able to view and print bills from previous months. Please note that the online bill presentment is in full-page format, unlike the postcard bills that we mail. Should you not receive your mailed bill, using this online feature will allow members to print an online copy of the bill for their records.

While the Sharon WSC Board of Directors recognizes and understands the impact that this issue has created, the Board must ensure that the policies and procedures set forth in the Sharon WSC Tariff are followed. Each active Sharon WSC Membership account balance must be paid to ensure that the membership continues to grow and thrive in this demanding environment. Even though it is unfortunate that this delay happened, we are hopeful that our members will recognize that our staff has a very precise billing schedule that they are required to follow and have worked diligently to produce an online bill presentment option, which is available to all. As a board, we have confidence in our staff to produce and mail billing on time but are unable to control what happens to the bills after they've been delivered to the USPS Office. We would like to remind our members that not receiving the bill in the mail does not exempt them from any late and/or lock fees being added to their account if the balance is not paid by the due date.

Respectfully,

Sharon Water Supply Corporation  
Board of Directors