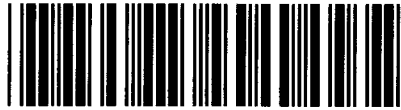




Control Number: 44236



Item Number: 69

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SOAH DOCKET NO. 473-15-4944.WS
DOCKET NO. 44236

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APPLICATION OF CUSTOM WATER COMPANY, LLC, FOR A RATE/TARIFF CHANGE	§ § § §	STATE OFFICE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF FILING CLERK ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
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STAFF'S MOTION FOR INTERIM RATES

COMES NOW the Commission Staff of the Public Utility Commission of Texas, representing the public interest, and files this Motion for Interim Rates.

I. BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2015, Custom Water Company, LLC filed an application for a rate/tariff change with a proposed effective date of March 20, 2015. Under Custom Water's proposed rates, which the company began charging on March 20, 2015, the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons for a residential 5/8 or 3/4 pipe would be increased to \$54.43 from \$36.00, and the gallonage charge will increase to \$7 for each additional 1,000 gallons over the minimum, up from \$5.¹ The application was found administratively complete on February 26, 2015. The Commission administrative law judge (ALJ) set a deadline of June 19, 2015 for ratepayers to protest the proposed rates, and a deadline of July 20, 2015 for Commission Staff to request a hearing. On July 20, 2015, Staff requested that the Commission refer this case to hearing. On July 27, 2015, the docket was referred to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).

¹ Customer Water Company's Application at 34 (Jan. 12, 2015).

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II. REQUEST FOR INTERIM RATES

TEX. WATER CODE § 13.1871(s) specifically authorizes interim rates until a final determination is made on a proposed rate.² 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 24.29(a) (TAC) further states that the Commission may, on a motion by the Commission staff or by the appellant, establish interim rates. 16 TAC § 24.29(d) explains:

Interim rates may be established by the commission in those cases under the commission's original or appellate jurisdiction where the proposed increase in rates could result in an unreasonable economic hardship on the utility's customers, unjust or unreasonable rates, or failure to set interim rates could result in an unreasonable economic hardship on the utility.

As detailed in the attached memorandum of Leila Guerrero, of the Commission's Water Utility Division, Staff has identified several errors in Custom Water's cost of service schedules that indicate that the rates now being collected from customers, effective since March 20, 2015, are not justified or reasonable. Specifically, it appears that Custom Water requested loan payments as part of its miscellaneous expenses, when loan payments are not expenses and are not properly considered as part of a utility's cost of service. The assets for which Custom Water requested loan payments for are assets on which depreciation may be calculated. Those assets will also earn a return. Therefore, if the Applicant recovered loan payments for those assets as well, the customers would be paying for those assets twice. Further, it appears that Custom Water requested recovery of expenses not allowed pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.31(b)(2). Staff requests that, for the pendency of this docket, interim rates be set at the rates previously approved by the Commission. The tariff reflecting the rates previously approved are attached as part of Ms. Guerrero's recommendation.

III. CONCLUSION

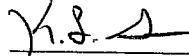
Staff respectfully requests that interim rates be established at the rates previously approved by the Commission for the pendency of this docket.

² See for example, similar language in Public Utility Regulatory Act, 36.151 "Unreasonable or Violative Existing Rates," which states that "the regulatory authority, on its own motion or on complaint by an affected person" may establish rates for a utility. That language has been commonly interpreted to allow the Staff of the PUC to be the entity that makes the motion to try to establish just and reasonable rates. See *Petition*

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Uhlig Pemberton
Division Director
Legal Division

Karen S. Hubbard
Managing Attorney
Legal Division



Katherine Lengieza Gross
Attorney-Legal Division
State Bar No. 24065610
(512) 936-7277
(512) 936-7268 (facsimile)
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, Texas 78711-3326

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of this document will be served on all parties of record on September 16, 2015 in accordance with 16 TAC § 22.74.



Katherine Lengieza Gross

Public Utility Commission of Texas

Memorandum

TO: Katherine Gross, Attorney
Legal Division

THRU: Tammy Benter, Director
Debi Loockerman, Rates Team Lead
Water Utilities Division

FROM: Leila Guerrero, Regulatory Accountant/Auditor
Water Utilities Division

DATE: September 9, 2015

SUBJECT: *Docket No. 44236; Application of Custom Water Company, LLC, for a Rate/Tariff Change*

Recommended for Interim Rates

Based on the following analysis, Staff recommends that the Commission set interim rates at Custom Water Company, LLC's ("Applicant" or "Custom Water") previously approved rates, as shown in the attached tariff, until a final order in Docket No. 44236 is issued by the Commission.

Interim rates may be established under 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 24.29(d) (TAC) where the proposed increase in rates could result in unjust or unreasonable rates. Staff's current calculated cost of service does not support an increase from the previously approved rate. Therefore, Staff believes that the proposed rates are not just and reasonable.

On January 12, 2015, Custom Water, Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) No. 13211, filed an application with the Commission to change its water rates and to amend its tariff in Montague County, Texas. The application affects the rates charged to customers served by the following two water systems: Montague Water System, Public Water System (PWS) No. 1690004; and Oak Shores Water System, PWS No. 1690011. The total number of customers served by Custom Water is 252 connections.

Custom Water's previously approved rates were a base rate of \$36.00 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size as the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons, and \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the minimum. The Applicant filed the application with a proposed effective date of **March 20, 2015**; therefore, the Applicant has been charging the proposed rates of a base rate of \$54.43 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size including 1,000 gallons, and \$7.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the minimum.

16 TAC § 24.31(b) permits a utility to include in its cost of service the following general categories of expenses: operations and maintenance, depreciation, assessments and taxes other than income taxes, federal income taxes on a normalized basis, reasonable expenditures for ordinary advertising, contributions, and donations, and funds expended in support of membership in professional or trade organizations. Staff has evaluated the application, and the review has been limited to the factual statements presented in the application and information provided by Applicant in response to Requests for Information (RFIs). The Applicant appears to have requested recovery of some expenses not allowed pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.31(b), as detailed in Table 1 below.

Staff has identified unsupported and disallowable claims in the Applicant's request. Staff reserves the right to identify additional proposed adjustments based on a more complete review of the Applicant's request.

Table 1 – Costs improperly included in Applicant's cost of service

Fines/Penalties paid to TCEQ	\$ 4,130
Loan payments for 2014 Chevy truck	1,860
Loan payments for 2014 Kubota	3,525
Loan payments for new wells	19,425
Loan payments for 2000 Ford truck	10,372
Loan payments for 2013 GMC truck (principal + interest)	6,841
Unsupported miscellaneous expenses	681
Unsupported known & measurable adjustments	12,061
<i>Total disallowed Miscellaneous Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 58,895¹</i>
Rate Case Expense disallowed (allowed \$3,000 out of \$18,000)	15,000 ²
Adjustment on Salaries & Wages	7,833 ³
Adjustment - Office Expenses (veterinary exp. \$639; uniform exp. \$1,015)	1,654 ⁴
Adjustment – Office Expenses (cell phones & land lines)	5,956 ⁵
<i>Total disallowed Cost of Service</i>	<i>\$ 89,338</i>

Fines are specifically excluded from a company's cost of service pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.31(b)(2)(I).

Additionally, Custom Water has improperly included loan payments as part of its cost of service. Loan payments are not expenses and are not properly considered as part of a utility's cost of service. This is because depreciation expenses, which will be part of the utility's revenue

¹ See Application at 13 of 40 Section IV. A and bates page 61 "Custom Water Co, LLC Profit & Loss" (Jan. 12, 2015).

² See Application at 13 and Custom Water's Response to Staff's RFI 1-16 (May 8, 2015).

³ See Application at 63.

⁴ See Application at 61.

⁵ *Id.*

requirement, are calculated on the assets for which the loans were acquired, and the net assets will also earn a return. Therefore, if the Applicant recovered both the loan payments, depreciation, and return, the customers would be paying for the plant cost twice. Further, even if these loans were properly included as expenses, three vehicles for a utility with only 252 customers is not reasonable and necessary to providing water service pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.31(b)(2)(I).

The Applicant also included in its miscellaneous expenses \$681 and \$12,061 for known and measurable adjustments; however, both amounts were unsupported by documentation. Supporting documentation for rate-case expenses were also incomplete; therefore, Staff recommends allowing only \$3,000 of the utility's request based at this time. Pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.28(7), *"A utility may recover rate case expenses, including attorney fees, incurred as a result of a rate change application only if the expenses are reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest."*

Salaries and wages and telephone expenses appear to improperly include costs that were incurred for the owner's affiliated businesses. Finally, veterinary expenses and dry-cleaning expenses amounting to \$639 and \$1,015, respectively, appear unreasonable and unnecessary to providing water service pursuant to 16 TAC § 24.31(b)(2)(I).

These adjustments, as well as possible yet-to-be identified adjustments, will be further detailed in Staff's direct testimony.

WATER UTILITY TARIFF FOR

Custom Water Co., LLC
(Utility Name)

146 Alamo Road
(Business Address)

Montague, Texas 76251
(City, State, Zip Code)

(940) 894-3172
(Area Code/Telephone)

This tariff is effective for utility operations under the following Certificate of Convenience and Necessity:

13211

This tariff is effective in the following county (ies):

Montague

This tariff is effective in the following cities or unincorporated towns (if any):

Montague

This tariff is effective for the following subdivisions or systems:

Montague Water System: PWS #1690004
Oak Shores Water System: PWS #1690011

The above utility lists the following sections of its tariff (if additional pages are needed for a section, all pages should be numbered consecutively):

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SP/JL

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE

Section 1.01 - Rates

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u>	<u>Gallonage Charge</u>
5/8" or 3/4"	<u>\$36.00</u> (Includes 1000 gallons)	<u>\$5.00</u> per 1000 gallons over 1000 gallons
1"	<u>\$70.72</u>	
1 1/2 "	<u>\$135.24</u>	
2"	<u>\$212.67</u>	
3"	<u>\$393.34</u>	

FORM OF PAYMENT: The utility will accept the following forms of payment:
 Cash X, Check X, Money Order X, Credit Card _____, Other (specify) _____
 THE UTILITY MAY REQUIRE EXACT CHANGE FOR PAYMENTS AND MAY REFUSE TO ACCEPT
 PAYMENTS MADE USING MORE THAN \$1.00 IN SMALL COINS. A WRITTEN RECEIPT WILL BE
 GIVEN FOR CASH PAYMENTS.

REGULATORY ASSESSMENT 1.0%
 TCEQ RULES REQUIRE THE UTILITY TO COLLECT A FEE OF ONE PERCENT OF THE RETAIL
 MONTHLY BILL.

Section 1.02 - Miscellaneous Fees

TAP FEE \$350.00
 TAP FEE COVERS THE UTILITY'S COSTS FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR TO INSTALL A
 STANDARD RESIDENTIAL 5/8" or 3/4" METER. AN ADDITIONAL FEE TO COVER UNIQUE
 COSTS IS PERMITTED IF LISTED ON THIS TARIFF.

TAP FEE (Unique costs) Actual Cost
 FOR EXAMPLE, A ROAD BORE FOR CUSTOMERS OUTSIDE OF SUBDIVISIONS OR RESIDENTIAL
 AREAS.

TAP FEE (Large meter) Actual Cost
 TAP FEE IS THE UTILITY'S ACTUAL COST FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR METER SIZE
 INSTALLED.

METER RELOCATION FEE Actual Relocation Cost, Not to Exceed Tap Fee
 THIS FEE MAY BE CHARGED IF A CUSTOMER REQUESTS THAT AN EXISTING METER BE
 RELOCATED.

METER TEST FEE \$ 25.00
 REQUESTS A SECOND METER TEST WITHIN A TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND THE TEST INDICATES
 THAT THE METER IS RECORDING ACCURATELY. THE FEE MAY NOT EXCEED \$25.

RATES LISTED ARE EFFECTIVE ONLY
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SECTION 1.0 – RATE SCHEDULE (Continued)

RECONNECTION FEE

THE RECONNECT FEE MUST BE PAID BEFORE SERVICE CAN BE RESTORED TO A CUSTOMER WHO HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS (OR OTHER REASONS LISTED UNDER SECTION 2.0 OF THIS TARIFF):

- a) Non payment of bill (Maximum \$25.00) \$25.00
- b) Customer's request that service be disconnected..... \$50.00

TRANSFER FEE \$50.00

THE TRANSFER FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR CHANGING AN ACCOUNT NAME AT THE SAME SERVICE LOCATION WHEN THE SERVICE IS NOT DISCONNECTED

LATE CHARGE (EITHER \$5.00 OR 10% OF THE BILL)..... \$5.00

TCEQ RULES ALLOW A ONE-TIME PENALTY TO BE CHARGED ON DELINQUENT BILLS. A LATE CHARGE MAY NOT BE APPLIED TO ANY BALANCE TO WHICH THE PENALTY WAS APPLIED IN A PREVIOUS BILLING.

RETURNED CHECK CHARGE \$25.00

RETURNED CHECK CHARGES MUST BE BASED ON THE UTILITY'S DOCUMENTABLE COST.

CUSTOMER DEPOSIT RESIDENTIAL (Maximum \$50)..... \$50.00

COMMERCIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL DEPOSIT . 1/6TH OF ESTIMATED ANNUAL BILL

GOVERNMENTAL TESTING, INSPECTION AND COSTS SURCHARGE:

WHEN AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY TCEQ AND AFTER NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS, THE UTILITY MAY INCREASE RATES TO RECOVER INCREASED COSTS FOR INSPECTION FEES AND WATER TESTING. [30 TAC 291.21(K)(2)]

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES:

REFER TO SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY FOR TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND CHARGES WHEN NEW CONSTRUCTION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SERVICE.

RATES LISTED ARE EFFECTIVE ONLY
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SECTION 2.0 -- SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES

The utility will have the most current Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules, Chapter 291, Water Utility Regulation, available at its office for reference purposes. The Rules and this tariff shall be available for public inspection and reproduction at a reasonable cost. The latest Rules or Commission approved changes to the Rules supersede any rules or requirements in this tariff.

Section 2.01 - Application for Water Service

All applications for service will be made on the utility's standard application or contract form (attached in the Appendix to this tariff), will be signed by the applicant, any required fees (deposits, reconnect, tap, extension fees, etc. as applicable) will be paid and easements, if required, will be granted before service is provided by the utility. A separate application or contract will be made for each service location.

Section 2.02 - Refusal of Service

The utility may decline to serve an applicant until the applicant has complied with the regulations of the regulatory agencies (state and municipal regulations) and for the reasons outlined in the TCEQ Rules. In the event that the utility refuses to serve an applicant, the utility will inform the applicant in writing of the basis of its refusal. The utility is also required to inform the applicant that a complaint may be filed with the Commission.

Section 2.03 - Fees and Charges & Easements Required Before Service Can Be Connected

(A) Customer Deposits

If a residential applicant cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility, the applicant may be required to pay a deposit as provided for in Section 1.02 - Miscellaneous Fees of this tariff. The utility will keep records of the deposit and credit interest in accordance with TCEQ Rules.

Residential applicants 65 years of age or older may not be required to pay deposits unless the applicant has an outstanding account balance with the utility or another water or sewer utility which accrued within the last two years.

Nonresidential applicants who cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility may be required to make a deposit that does not exceed an amount equivalent to one-sixth of the estimated annual billings.

SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Refund of deposit - If service is not connected, or after disconnection of service, the utility will promptly refund the customer's deposit plus accrued interest or the balance, if any, in excess of the unpaid bills for service furnished. The utility may refund the deposit at any time prior to termination of utility service but must refund the deposit plus interest for any residential customer who has paid 18 consecutive billings without being delinquent.

(B) Tap or Reconnect Fees

A new customer requesting service at a location where service has not previously been provided must pay a tap fee as provided in Section 1. A customer requesting service where service has previously been provided must pay a reconnect fee as provided in Section 1. Any applicant or existing customer required to pay for any costs not specifically set forth in the rate schedule pages of this tariff shall be given a written explanation of such costs prior to request for payment and/or commencement of construction. If the applicant or existing customer does not believe that these costs are reasonable or necessary, the applicant or existing customer shall be informed of their right to appeal such costs to the TCEQ or such other regulatory authority having jurisdiction over the utility's rates in that portion of the utility's service area in which the applicant's or existing customer's property(ies) is located.

Fees in addition to the regular tap fee may be charged if listed specifically in Section 1 to cover unique costs not normally incurred as permitted by 30 T. A. C. 291.86(a)(1)(C). For example, a road bore for customers outside a subdivision or residential area could be considered a unique cost.

(C) Easement Requirement

Where recorded public utility easements on the service applicant's property do not exist or public road right-of-way easements are not available to access the applicant's property, the Utility may require the applicant to provide it with a permanent recorded public utility easement on and across the applicant's real property sufficient to provide service to that applicant. Such easement(s) shall not be used for the construction of production, storage, transmission or pressure facilities unless they are needed for adequate service to that applicant.

Section 2.04 - Utility Response to Applications for Service

After the applicant has met all the requirements, conditions and regulations for service, the utility will install tap, meter and utility cut-off valve and/or take all necessary actions to initiate service. The utility will serve each qualified applicant for service within 5 working days unless line extensions or new facilities are required. If construction is required to fill the order and if it cannot be completed within 30 days, the utility will provide the applicant with a written explanation of the construction required and an expected date of service.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Except for good cause where service has previously been provided, service will be reconnected within one working day after the applicant has met the requirements for reconnection.

Section 2.05 - Customer Responsibility

The customer will be responsible for furnishing and laying the necessary customer service pipe from the meter location to the place of consumption. Customers will not be allowed to use the utility's cutoff valve on the utility's side of the meter. Existing customers may install cutoff valves on their side of the meter and are encouraged to do so. All new customers may be required to install and maintain a cutoff valve on their side of the meter.

No direct connection between a public water supply system and any potential source of contamination or between a public water supply system and a private water source (ex. private well) will be allowed. A customer shall not connect, or allow any other person or party to connect, onto any water lines on his premises.

Section 2.06 - Customer Service Inspections

Applicants for new service connections or facilities which have undergone extensive plumbing modifications are required to furnish the utility a completed customer service inspection certificate. The inspection certificate shall certify that the establishment is in compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, Section 290.46(j). The Utility is not required to perform these inspections for the applicant/customer, but will assist the applicant/customer in locating and obtaining the services of a certified inspector.

Section 2.07 - Back Flow Prevention Devices

No water connection shall be allowed to any residence or establishment where an actual or potential contamination hazard exists unless the public water facilities are protected from contamination by either an approved air gap, backflow prevention assembly, or other approved device. The type of device or backflow prevention assembly required shall be determined by the specific potential hazard identified in §290.47(i) Appendix I, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

The use of a backflow prevention assembly at the service connection shall be considered as additional backflow protection and shall not negate the use of backflow protection on internal hazards as outlined and enforced by local plumbing codes. When a customer service inspection certificate indicates that an adequate internal cross-connection control program is in effect, backflow protection at the water service entrance or meter is not required.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

At any residence or establishment where it has been determined by a customer service inspection, that there is no actual or potential contamination hazard, as referenced in Section 290.47(i) Appendix I, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, then a backflow prevention assembly or device is not required. Outside hose bibs do require, at a minimum, the installation and maintenance of a working atmospheric vacuum breaker.

All backflow prevention assemblies or devices shall be tested upon installation by a TCEQ certified backflow prevention assembly tester and certified to be operating within specifications. Backflow prevention assemblies which are installed to provide protection against health hazards must also be tested and certified to be operating within specifications at least annually by a certified backflow prevention assembly tester.

If the utility determines that a backflow prevention assembly or device is required, the utility will provide the customer or applicant with a list of TCEQ certified backflow prevention assembly testers. The customer will be responsible for the cost of installation and testing, if any, of backflow prevention assembly or device. The customer should contact several qualified installers to compare prices before installation. The customer must pay for any required maintenance and annual testing and must furnish a copy of the test results demonstrating that the assembly is functioning properly to the utility within 30 days after the anniversary date of the installation unless a different date is agreed upon.

Section 2.08 - Access to Customer's Premises

The utility will have the right of access to the customer's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of installing, testing, inspecting or repairing water mains or other equipment used in connection with its provision of water service, or for the purpose of removing its property and disconnecting lines, and for all other purposes necessary to the operation of the utility system including inspecting the customer's plumbing for code, plumbing or tariff violations. The customer shall allow the utility and its personnel access to the customer's property to conduct any water quality tests or inspections required by law. Unless necessary to respond to equipment failure, leak or other condition creating an immediate threat to public health and safety or the continued provision of adequate utility service to others, such entry upon the customer's property shall be during normal business hours and the utility personnel will attempt to notify the customer that they will be working on the customer's property. The customer may require any utility representative, employee, contractor, or agent seeking to make such entry identify themselves, their affiliation with the utility, and the purpose of their entry.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

All customers or service applicants shall provide access to meters and utility cutoff valves at all times reasonably necessary to conduct ordinary utility business and after normal business hours as needed to protect and preserve the integrity of the public drinking water supply.

Section 2.09 - Meter Requirements, Readings, and Testing

One meter is required for each residential, commercial, or industrial connection. All water sold by the utility will be billed based on meter measurements. The utility will provide, install, own and maintain meters to measure amounts of water consumed by its customers.

Meters will be read at monthly intervals and as nearly as possible on the corresponding day of each monthly meter reading period unless otherwise authorized by the Commission.

Meter tests. The utility will, upon the request of a customer, and, if the customer so desires, in his or her presence or in that of his or her authorized representative, make without charge a test of the accuracy of the customer's meter. If the customer asks to observe the test, the test will be made during the utility's normal working hours at a time convenient to the customer. Whenever possible, the test will be made on the customer's premises, but may, at the utility's discretion, be made at the utility's testing facility. If within a period of two years the customer requests a new test, the utility will make the test, but if the meter is found to be within the accuracy standards established by the American Water Works Association, the utility will charge the customer a fee which reflects the cost to test the meter up to a maximum \$25 for a residential customer. Following the completion of any requested test, the utility will promptly advise the customer of the date of removal of the meter, the date of the test, the result of the test, and who made the test.

Section 2.10 - Billing

(A) Regular Billing

Bills from the utility will be mailed monthly unless otherwise authorized by the Commission. The due date of bills for utility service will be at least sixteen (16) days from the date of issuance. The postmark on the bill or, if there is no postmark on the bill, the recorded date of mailing by the utility will constitute proof of the date of issuance. Payment for utility service is delinquent if full payment, including late fees and the regulatory assessment, is not received at the utility or the utility's authorized payment agency by 5:00 p.m. on the due date. If the due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the due date for payment purposes will be the next workday after the due date.

SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

(B) Late Fees

A late penalty of either \$5.00 or 10.0% will be charged on bills received after the due date. The penalty on delinquent bills will not be applied to any balance to which the penalty was applied in a previous billing. The utility must maintain a record of the date of mailing to charge the late penalty.

(C) Information on Bill

Each bill will provide all information required by the TCEQ Rules. For each of the systems it operates, the utility will maintain and note on the monthly bill a local or toll-free telephone number (or numbers) to which customers can direct questions about their utility service.

(D) Prorated Bills

If service is interrupted or seriously impaired for 24 consecutive hours or more, the utility will prorate the monthly base bill in proportion to the time service was not available to reflect this loss of service.

Section 2.11- Payments

All payments for utility service shall be delivered or mailed to the utility's business office. If the business office fails to receive payment prior to the time of noticed disconnection for non-payment of a delinquent account, service will be terminated as scheduled. Utility service crews shall not be allowed to collect payments on customer accounts in the field.

Payment of an account by any means that has been dishonored and returned by the payor or payee's bank, shall be deemed to be delinquent. All returned payments must be redeemed with cash or valid money order. If a customer has two returned payments within a twelve month period, the customer shall be required to pay a deposit if one has not already been paid.

Section 2.12 - Service Disconnection

(A) With Notice

Utility service may be disconnected if the bill has not been paid in full by the date listed on the termination notice. The termination date must be at least 10 days after the notice is mailed or hand delivered.

The utility is encouraged to offer a deferred payment plan to a customer who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full and is willing to pay the balance in reasonable installments. However, a customer's utility service may be disconnected if a bill has not been paid or a deferred payment agreement entered into within 26 days from the date of issuance of a bill and if proper notice of termination has been given.

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SPAL

SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Notice of termination must be a separate mailing or hand delivery in accordance with the TCEQ Rules.

B) Without Notice

Utility service may also be disconnected without notice for reasons as described in the TCEQ Rules.

Section 2.13 - Reconnection of Service

Utility personnel must be available during normal business hours to accept payments on the day service is disconnected and the following day unless service was disconnected at the customer's request or due to a hazardous condition.

Service will be reconnected within 36 hours after the past due bill, reconnect fees and any other outstanding charges are paid or the conditions which caused service to be disconnected are corrected.

Section 2.14 - Service Interruptions

The utility will make all reasonable efforts to prevent interruptions of service. If interruptions occur, the utility will re-establish service within the shortest possible time. Except for momentary interruptions due to automatic equipment operations, the utility will keep a complete record of all interruptions, both emergency and scheduled and will notify the Commission in writing of any service interruptions affecting the entire system or any major division of the system lasting more than four hours. The notice will explain the cause of the interruptions.

Section 2.15 - Quality of Service

The utility will plan, furnish, and maintain production, treatment, storage, transmission, and distribution facilities of sufficient size and capacity to provide a continuous and adequate supply of water for all reasonable consumer uses. Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, the utility will maintain facilities as described in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

Section 2.16 - Customer Complaints and Disputes

If a customer or applicant for service lodges a complaint, the utility will promptly make a suitable investigation and advise the complainant of the results. Service will not be disconnected pending completion of the investigation. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the utility's response, the utility must advise the complainant that he has recourse through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality complaint process. Pending resolution of a complaint, the commission may require continuation or restoration of service.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

The utility will maintain a record of all complaints which shows the name and address of the complainant, the date and nature of the complaint and the adjustment or disposition thereof, for a period of two years after the final settlement of the complaint.

In the event of a dispute between a customer and a utility regarding any bill for utility service, the utility will conduct an investigation and report the results to the customer. If the dispute is not resolved, the utility will inform the customer that a complaint may be filed with the Commission.

Section 2.17 - Customer Liability

Customer shall be liable for any damage or injury to utility-owned property shown to be caused by the customer.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY

Section 3.01 - Standard Extension Requirements

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES: NO CONTRIBUTION IN AID OF CONSTRUCTION MAY BE REQUIRED OF ANY CUSTOMER EXCEPT AS PROVIDED FOR IN THIS APPROVED EXTENSION POLICY.

The Utility is not required to extend service to any applicant outside of its certified service area and will only do so under terms and conditions mutually agreeable to the Utility and the applicant, in compliance with TCEQ rules and policies, and upon extension of the Utility's certified service area boundaries by the TCEQ.

The applicant for service will be given an itemized statement of the costs, options such as rebates to the customer, sharing of construction costs between the utility and the customer, or sharing of costs between the customer and other applicants prior to beginning construction.

The Utility is not required to extend service to any applicant outside of its certificated service area and will only do so under terms and conditions mutually agreeable to the Utility and the applicant, in compliance with TCEQ rules and policies, and upon extension of the Utility's certificated service area boundaries by the TCEQ.

Section 3.02 - Costs Utilities and Service Applicants Shall Bear

Within its certified area, the utility will pay the cost of the first 200 feet of any water main or distribution line necessary to extend service to an individual residential customer within a platted subdivision.

However, if the residential customer requesting service purchased the property after the developer was notified in writing of the need to provide facilities to the utility, the utility may charge for the first 200 feet. The utility must also be able to document that the developer of the subdivision refused to provide facilities compatible with the utility's facilities in accordance with the utility's approved extension policy after receiving a written request from the utility.

Residential customers will be charged the equivalent of the costs of extending service to their property from the nearest transmission or distribution line even if that line does not have adequate capacity to serve the customer. However, if the customer places unique, non-standard service demands upon the system, the customer may be charged the additional cost of extending service to and throughout their property, including the cost of all necessary transmission and storage facilities necessary to meet the service demands anticipated to be created by that property.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Unless an exception is granted by the TCEQ's Executive Director, the residential service applicant shall not be required to pay for costs of main extensions greater than 2" in diameter for water distribution and pressure wastewater collection lines and 6" in diameter for gravity wastewater lines.

Exceptions may be granted by the TCEQ Executive Director if

- adequate service cannot be provided to the applicant using the maximum line sizes listed due to distance or elevation, in which case, it shall be the utility's burden to justify that a larger diameter pipe is required for adequate service;
- or larger minimum line sizes are required under subdivision platting requirements or building codes of municipalities within whose corporate limits or extraterritorial jurisdiction the point of use is located; or the residential service applicant is located outside the CCN service area.

If an exception is granted, the Utility shall establish a proportional cost plan for the specific extension or a rebate plan which may be limited to seven years to return the portion of the applicant's costs for oversizing as new customers are added to ensure that future applicants for service on the line pay at least as much as the initial service applicant.

For purposes of determining the costs that service applicants shall pay, commercial customers with service demands greater than residential customer demands in the certified area, industrial, and wholesale customers shall be treated as developers. A service applicant requesting a one inch meter for a lawn sprinkler system to service a residential lot is not considered nonstandard service.

If an applicant requires service other than the standard service provided by the utility, such applicant will be required to pay all expenses incurred by the utility in excess of the expenses that would be incurred in providing the standard service and connection beyond 200 feet and throughout his property including the cost of all necessary transmission facilities.

The utility will bear the full cost of any over-sizing of water mains necessary to serve other customers in the immediate area. The individual residential customer shall not be charged for any additional production, storage, or treatment facilities. Contributions in aid of construction may not be required of individual residential customers for production, storage, treatment or transmission facilities unless otherwise approved by the Commission under this specific extension policy.

SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.03 - Contributions in Aid of Construction

Developers may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction in amounts sufficient to furnish the development with all facilities necessary to provide for reasonable local demand requirements and to comply with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria for facilities used in the production, transmission, pumping, or treatment of water or Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum requirements. For purposes of this subsection, a developer is one who subdivides or requests more than two meters on a piece of property. Commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers will be treated as developers.

Any applicant who places unique or non-standard service demands on the system may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction for the actual costs of any additional facilities required to maintain compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria for water production, treatment, pumping, storage and transmission.

Any service extension to a subdivision (recorded or unrecorded) may be subject to the provisions and restrictions of 30 TAC 291.86(d). When a developer wishes to extend the system to prepare to service multiple new connections, the charge shall be the cost of such extension, plus a pro-rata charge for facilities which must be committed to such extension compliant with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria. As provided by 30 T.A.C. 291.85(e)(3), for purposes of this section, commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers shall be treated as developers.

A utility may only charge a developer standby fees for unrecovered costs of facilities committed to a developer's property under the following circumstances:

- Under a contract and only in accordance with the terms of the contract; or
- if service is not being provided to a lot or lots within two years after installation of facilities necessary to provide service to the lots has been completed and if the standby fees are included on the utility's approved tariff after a rate change application has been filed. The fees cannot be billed to the developer or collected until the standby fees have been approved by the commission or executive director.
- for purposes of this section, a manufactured housing rental community can only be charged standby fees under a contract or if the utility installs the facilities necessary to provide individually metered service to each of the rental lots or spaces in the community.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.04 - Appealing Connection Costs

The imposition of additional extension costs or charges as provided by Sections 3.0 - Extension Policy of this tariff shall be subject to appeal as provided in this tariff, TCEQ rules, or the rules of such other regulatory authority as may have jurisdiction over the utility's rates and services. Any applicant required to pay for any costs not specifically set forth in the rate schedule pages of this tariff shall be given a written explanation of such costs prior to payment and/or commencement of construction. If the applicant does not believe that these costs are reasonable or necessary, the applicant shall be informed of the right to appeal such costs to the TCEQ or such other regulatory authority having jurisdiction over the utility's rates in that portion of the utility's service area in which the applicant's property(ies) is located.

Section 3.05 - Applying for Service

The Utility will provide a written service application form to the applicant for each request for service received by the Utility's business offices. A separate application shall be required for each potential service location if more than one service connection is desired by any individual applicant. Service application forms will be available at the Utility's business office during normal weekday business hours. Service applications will be sent by prepaid first class United States mail to the address provided by the applicant upon request. Completed applications should be returned by hand delivery in case there are questions which might delay fulfilling the service request. Completed service applications may be submitted by mail if hand delivery is not possible.

Where a new tap or service connection is required, the service applicant shall be required to submit a written service application and request that a tap be made. A diagram, map, plat, or written metes and bounds description of precisely where the applicant desires each tap or service connection is to be made and, if necessary, where the meter is to be installed, along the applicant's property line may also be required with the tap request. The actual point of connection and meter installation must be readily accessible to Utility personnel for inspection, servicing, and meter reading while being reasonably secure from damage by vehicles and mowers. If the Utility has more than one main adjacent to the service applicant's property, the tap or service connection will be made to the Utility's nearest service main with adequate capacity to service the applicant's full potential service demand. Beyond the initial 200 feet, the customer shall bear only the equivalent cost of extending from the nearest main. If the tap or service connection cannot be made at the applicant's desired location, it will be made at another location mutually acceptable to the applicant and the Utility. If no agreement on location can be made, the applicant may refer the matter to the TCEQ for resolution.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.06 - Qualified Service Applicant

A "qualified service applicant" is an applicant who has: (1) met all of the Utility's requirements for service contained in this tariff, TCEQ rules and/or TCEQ order, (2) has made payment or made arrangement for payment of tap fees, (3) has provided all easements and rights-of-way required to provide service to the requested location, (4) delivered an executed customer service inspection certificate to the Utility, if applicable, and (5) has executed a customer service application for each location to which service is being requested.

The Utility shall serve each qualified service applicant within its certified service area as soon as practical after receiving a completed service application. All service requests will be fulfilled within the time limits prescribed by TCEQ rules once the applicant has met all conditions precedent to achieving "qualified service applicant" status. If a service request cannot be fulfilled within the required period, the applicant shall be notified in writing of the delay, its cause and the anticipated date that service will be available. The TCEQ service dates shall not become applicable until the service applicant has met all conditions precedent to becoming a qualified service applicant as defined by TCEQ rules.

Section 3.07 - Developer Requirements

As a condition of service to a new subdivision, the Utility shall require a developer (as defined by TCEQ rule) to provide permanent recorded public utility easements as a condition of service to any location within the developer's property.

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SECTION 4.0 -- DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN
(Utility must attach copy of TCEQ approved Drought Contingency Plan)

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APPENDIX A -- SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT

From 30 TAC Chapter 290.47(b), Appendix B

SERVICE AGREEMENT

- I. **PURPOSE.** The NAME OF WATER SYSTEM is responsible for protecting the drinking water supply from contamination or pollution which could result from improper private water distribution system construction or configuration. The purpose of this service agreement is to notify each customer of the restrictions which are in place to provide this protection. The utility enforces these restrictions to ensure the public health and welfare. Each customer must sign this agreement before the NAME OF WATER SYSTEM will begin service. In addition, when service to an existing connection has been suspended or terminated, the water system will not re-establish service unless it has a signed copy of this agreement.
- II. **RESTRICTIONS.** The following unacceptable practices are prohibited by State regulations.
 - A. No direct connection between the public drinking water supply and a potential source of contamination is permitted. Potential sources of contamination shall be isolated from the public water system by an air-gap or an appropriate backflow prevention device.
 - B. No cross-connection between the public drinking water supply and a private water system is permitted. These potential threats to the public drinking water supply shall be eliminated at the service connection by the installation of an air-gap or a reduced pressure-zone backflow prevention device.
 - C. No connection which allows water to be returned to the public drinking water supply is permitted.
 - D. No pipe or pipe fitting which contains more than 8.0% lead may be used for the installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human use.
 - E. No solder or flux which contains more than 0.2% lead can be used for the installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human use.

APPENDIX A -- SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT (Continued)

III. SERVICE AGREEMENT. The following are the terms of the service agreement between the NAME OF WATER SYSTEM (the Water System) and NAME OF CUSTOMER (the Customer).

- A. The Water System will maintain a copy of this agreement as long as the Customer and/or the premises is connected to the Water System.
- B. The Customer shall allow his property to be inspected for possible cross-connections and other potential contamination hazards. These inspections shall be conducted by the Water System or its designated agent prior to initiating new water service; when there is reason to believe that cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards exist; or after any major changes to the private water distribution facilities. The inspections shall be conducted during the Water System's normal business hours.
- C. The Water System shall notify the Customer in writing of any cross-connection or other potential contamination hazard which has been identified during the initial inspection or the periodic reinspection.
- D. The Customer shall immediately remove or adequately isolate any potential cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards on his premises.
- E. The Customer shall, at his expense, properly install, test, and maintain any backflow prevention device required by the Water System. Copies of all testing and maintenance records shall be provided to the Water System.

IV. ENFORCEMENT. If the Customer fails to comply with the terms of the Service Agreement, the Water System shall, at its option, either terminate service or properly install, test, and maintain an appropriate backflow prevention device at the service connection. Any expenses associated with the enforcement of this agreement shall be billed to the Customer.

CUSTOMER'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX B -- APPLICATION FOR SERVICE
(Utility Must Attach Blank Copy)