CHARLOTTE

City Council
Follow-Up Report

October 15, 2010

October 4, 2010 – City Council Workshop

Evaluation of Utilities Customer Service

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During the Council dinner briefing, Council member Warren Turner requested that staff follow up with a commercial customer who contacted him about a high utility bill and the response from 311 that the customer's water would be turned off for non-payment.

Billing Question

On Monday, October 11, the City's Meter Reading Supervisor and Large Meter Maintenance Supervisor met with the account holder (Southern Steel) and his maintenance staff. Staff tested the 4-inch meter and all equipment was found to be functioning correctly. The account holder believes there is a problem with the billing system, causing his high bill concern. The usage history under review is as follows:

- August 5, 2010 billing: 52 Ccf
- September 2, 2010 billing: 428 Ccf (verified twice prior to billing)
- October 4, 2010 billing: 314 Ccf

Steve Miller, Division Manager of Utilities Customer Service, called the account holder on Tuesday, October 12 and left a message summarizing the field meeting. Mr. Miller informed the account holder that the City has placed the account on a 30-day hold to determine if the usage has returned to a normal level based on the consumption history of the account. The next meter reading date for the account is scheduled for October 25. The account holder has been instructed to contact Mr. Miller directly should he have any questions. Utilities will continue to work with the account holder until the issue is resolved and will provide an update on the final resolution when reached.

Review of CharMeck 311 in Utility Billing Calls

CharMeck 311 agents are trained to perform a variety of services for residential customers and limited services for commercial account holders requiring Utilities services from the City of

Charlotte. 311 agents cannot assist commercial account holders with request for new taps, relocating meters, industrial waste billing issues, and tier adjustments.

Currently, CharMeck 311 staff perform Move-In/Move-Out/Transfer requests, commercial (builder) meter sets, research and qualify accounts for high bill investigations, address service issues (leak at meter, leak at curb, etc), and report water quality issues experienced by the customer. CharMeck 311 staff is also trained to provide detailed bill explanation, status of high bill service order(s), qualify and set payment arrangements, adjust commercial deposits due to a provable error, and enter requests in the billing system for adjustments to be considered for verified private or City leaks.

CharMeck 311 agents are limited in the amount of bill detail and explanation for commercials accounts they can provide. Therefore, when unable to answer commercial account concerns, 311 agents are required to enter the request and a Utilities staff specialist then addresses the concerns.