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November 15, 2019

To: Mark Schaufler, Director, Water Utilities
Brent Boice, Assistant Director of Business Services

From: Dom Bennett, Account Services Manager, Water Utilities Business Services

Re: Reallocation of Meter Technician Position

Business Services processed over 420,000 bills in 2018. The city roughly has 37,000 accounts and that number continues to grow and with this growth comes added volume to billing.

Billing functions are performed by various staff with shared ownership in the process. Business Services currently dedicates 54 hours per week to billing functions. Going forward the Utility proposes creating a position to be responsible for all billing functions. Doing this would allow us to provide the appropriate resource allocation and organization for the Utility's ability to process accurate bills and address all situations, emergency and routine that go along with the billing functions.

The budgetary impact of a Utility Billing Specialist is approximately \$61,770 a year in wages and benefits. The current vacancy we are looking to reallocate to this position has a budget impact of \$66,068.00. This reallocation will bring a savings of \$4,298.00

	ACTUAL	STARTING
	Meter Technician	Utility Billing Specialist
Salary	44,783	42,057
Benefits	21,285	19,713
Total	66,068	61,770
Overall Budgetary Impact		(4,298.00)

Expansion Decision Process

Billing

Recent efforts to enhance our billing processes has shown a gap that we have in this area. We strive to provide efficient and accurate bills and adding this position will put us in position to where this can become a reality. There is a need and value in having one person manage the



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meter-reading schedule and ensure it is consistent with billing timelines. There is a need and value in having this same person responsible for bringing in the reads daily and auditing.

All of our tasks occur in congruence with the billing schedule/calendar and require a minimum expected amount of labor resources. The most recent year's work history has been used to determine the annual hour requirement of these tasks. The proposed position will participate in all 2080 labor hours as all billing functions will be assigned to them.

Actual production data from the year was used as a starting point to develop FTE requirements. Billing has to be worked daily: Business Services staff have spread these functions out in an effort to ensure all billing functions are done but in doing that other responsibilities have to be put on the back burner.

Not only would this position allow time for the customer service supervisor, metered services supervisor, and customer service representatives to focus on customer service, enhancing our customer experience, and training but it will help us with the proper segregation of duties. We will not have the same people taking payments also completing billing functions.

Meter Reading

The Utility has been working for several years to replace meters as a part of our meter replacement program. Under that program, meter reading has been shifting from physically reading each meter to electronic (radio reads). This process has multiple benefits to customers and improves efficiencies. The Meter Technician position while still physically collecting reads may be reduced in number as the meter replacement program continues. It is anticipated that with approximately 6,000 new electronically read meters installed and the implementation of a meter reading exchange with Public Water Supply District 13, we will be able to allow attrition to consume one Meter Technician.

Background

In addition, our attempt to remain in line with industry standards led us to reach out to other utilities, to inquire if they had similar positions to serve these needs. We identified the following positions were trying to achieve the same goals as we are with the Utility Billing Specialist.

- Independence, MO – Billing Specialist
- Columbia, MO – Billing Auditor
- Joplin, MO – Billing Specialist

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Business Services looks forward to your consideration of this recommendation and is happy to address any questions that may be needed.