

cc
March 23, 2016

Honorable Rick Osbon
135 Laurens Street SW
Aiken, SC 29801

Honorable Mayor:

I am writing to your office as a result of my inability to achieve satisfaction concerning a problem with the City of Aiken Utility Department.

On three separate occasions, while paying my water bill, I asked your associates at the payment counter to gaze upon my bill and check the amounts charged. It was noticeable to me that a problem may exist. However, your representatives may not be able to compare certain inputs with certain outputs as to ascertain an anomaly.

If you will remember, there was an earthquake in Edgefield County on February 14, 2014. That earthquake trembled the earth in Aiken County as well as the surrounding areas. As a result of that earthquake, the water line from the street to my house suffered an inline crack.

While this crack was not noticeable at the time, water usage began to rise. After a time, the crack became larger until I realized that there was a problem. I found the problem, repaired the leak and stopped the excess usage. Included please find your billing information showing usage, increasing usage, and usage after repairs were made.

This information was brought to the attention of the front line associates at the business office for the City of Aiken on three separate occasions. However, it was not noticeable to the City Associates that a problem existed. The response I received was that I needed to call another associate within the City Organization to arrange an appointment to present receipts for the repairs so they could verify that there was a problem and that the problem was repaired. Then, she breathed. At this point, many customers would give up. Who could blame them?

Perusing my bill, one can clearly see when the water usage started rising. This is in line with the earthquake. After a time, the usage was rising along with an increasing failure in the water line. When the problem was repaired, the usage declined. The utility bill did not decline in relation to the usage decline even though I explained the situation.

Because I work for a propane gas company, I work with my hands, hand tools, and pipe fittings every day. For that reason, there are no receipts to show and nothing other than

my word and the obvious numbers on your bills that there was a problem and that the problem was corrected. In other words, I repaired my own water system.

When the earthquake occurred on February 14, 2014, the water line ruptured, but the damage did not manifest itself until later. As you can see, the damage increased until I noticed the situation and corrected it. I also corrected several other water leaks which existed before I purchased the home. This brought my water meter readings in line with the amount of water actually used instead of readings including leaks in the system.

The following information is from my water bills:

Bill Date	Water Units	Sewer Units
1. 10/14/14	12.00	13.00
2. 11/01/14	13.00	13.00
3. 10/01/14	13.00	13.00

Water line break starts to split.

4. 11/03/14	16.00	13.00
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Water line cracks like Grand Canyon.

5. 12/01/14	24.00	13.00
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6. 02/01/15	24.00	13.00
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Asked someone to check to see if there was a leak.

7. 03/01/15	25.00	13.00
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8. 04/01/15	25.00	13.00
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Notice: Water meter will be changed out within the next month.

This is when I found the problems and repaired the breaks in the water lines.

9. 05/01/15	20.00	24.00
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Notice how the water usage went down?

10.	06/01/15	1.00	24.00
11.	07/01/15	1.00	24.00

I spoke to your front line personnel about the problem and was told again to call some one else with receipts, etc. This is when it gets interesting. Read above, there are no receipts.

12.	11/01/15	2.00	24.00
13.	12/01/15	2.00	24.00
14.	01/02/16	2.00	24.00
15.	02/01/16	2.00	24.00
16.	03/01/16	2.00	24.00

As you can see, the water usage decreased. However, the sewer usage has not decreased. I understand that the sewer usage is based on the water usage during the months of February, March, and April. I have no problem with that system. However, since I have been trying since May of last year to get this resolved, I care not how your system revolves.

Dear Mayor, in your dry cleaning business, if a customer approaches your front desk with two garments to be cleaned, do you charge them for twenty four garments to be cleaned? Furthermore, if a customer comes to your business with a problem, does your employee send them away to call someone who cares? This is your private business and not a long term plan. In private business, you are out of business. In Government, you are not held responsible unless you are respectable.

In the same vein, how can I be charged for twenty four units of sewage output with only two inputs of water? Is this the same as two garments charged for twenty four cleanings? In private business, you are out of business. In government, is this your platform?

Dealing with the City of Aiken is a necessary occasion. However, if the front line employees are not trained well enough, do not care, or do not have the necessary authority to take ownership of problems that occur, then the overseeing authorities need to be steps away, not phone calls away. A customer should not be forced to negotiate a maze or a water park in order to pay a fair share of the water/sewer system.

Since there are six Districts within the City of Aiken, I am sure that I am not the only person swimming upstream against this bureaucracy. It may be time for someone to hear and act rather than to listen and pass.

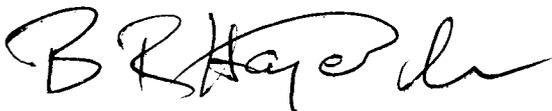
I voted for you, but your water department or your whole system needs tweaking. The next time, I may vote for you or campaign against you.

Should you wish to contact me, I may be reached at the following:

Bobby Randall Hayes, Jr. (Randy) 😊
57 Deerwood Ct.
Aiken, SC 29803
(803) 307-9633
brhayesjr@atlanticbb.net

I look forward to hearing from someone—anyone—concerning this matter.

Sincerely,



Bobby R. Hayes, Jr.

cc:

Gail Diggs-District 1

Lessie Price-District 2

Dick Dewar-District 3

Reggie Ebner-District 4

Steve Homoki-District 5

Philip Merry-District 6

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
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Columbia, South Carolina 29201

U. S. Congressman Joe Wilson
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Aiken, South Carolina 29801