

City of Nashua: Taking of Pennichuck Water Works, Inc.

DW 04-048

Pennichuck Water Works, Inc. and Pennichuck Corporation's Responses to  
Staff's Fourth Set of Data Requests

Date of Request: February 27, 2006  
Data Request No.: Staff 4-2

Date of Response: March 20, 2006  
Witness: Bonalyn J. Hartley

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**REQUEST:** With respect to customer service issues, please identify the following:

- a) How many customer service representatives, expressed as full-time equivalents, handle incoming calls from customers?
- b) What was the monthly call volume over the past two years?
- c) What are the responsibilities of the customer service representatives? What types of calls do they handle?
- d) Please provide the internal performance benchmarks used to measure call center service quality.

**RESPONSE:**

(a) The Company has six full time customer service representatives (which includes the receptionist, who routes customers' calls) and two part time customer service representative who regularly handle customer calls. In addition to those staff, there is one utility disconnect staff, one customer service supervisor and one customer service manager who are available to handle with customer calls as needed. This is in contrast to two customer service representatives proposed by Veolia. I understand that the City has indicated that it will spend an additional \$100,000 on customer billing and collections, which would have to include the cost of preparing and mailing bills, bill and envelope supplies and postage. This is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the Company's 24,000 customers.

(b) Over the past two years, the Company has received approximately 1,862 calls per month and an average of 22,344 calls per year.

(c) The Company's customer service representatives are responsible for taking phone calls and resolving customer issues, scheduling appointments for customers, tracking all aspects of billing for water usage for customers including analyzing meter readings, loading and unloading handheld devices, reviewing billing edit lists, and updating bills to customer accounts and providing billing information for printing and mailing of bills, taking payments from customers through mail and through electronic file transfers, handling all customer relations correspondence, handling property transfers, name changes, questions about consumption history, water conservation

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programs, periodic meter testing, back flow appointments, plumbing leaks in the home, service leaks, main breaks, managing the Consumer Confidence Report program for all customer notifications, and mailing information to new customers. The employee who is responsible for disconnection related issues handles customer calls regarding the disconnection program, including customer notification, visiting past due accounts, collecting payments on site at the customer's location, shutting off service for non payment and turning the service back on when payment is received.

(d) The Company tracks the time frame for response to customer complaints through a computerized system. These records are regularly reviewed by the customer service supervisor and the customer service manager. Any ongoing, unresolved issues raised by customers are brought to the attention of the Vice President for Administration for resolution. The Company's customer service representatives respond to calls in accordance with the Commission's regulations. There have been very few complaints to the Commission regarding the Company over the years, which is testament to the high level of the Company's service to its customers.