

State of Florida



Public Service Commission

CAPITAL CIRCLE OFFICE CENTER • 2540 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-

DATE: September 18, 2019

TO: Adam Teitzman, Commission Clerk, Office of Commission Clerk

FROM: Marissa Ramos, Public Utility Analyst III, Division of Economics *MR*

RE: Docket No. 20190121-WS – Application for limited proceeding rate increase in Polk County, by CHC VII, Ltd.

Please add the attached customer notice to the correspondence section of the docket file. The attached document was rendered on behalf of the Homeowner's Association for the Swiss and Hidden communities, communities that are served by CHC VII, Ltd. This document was given to Commission staff at the utility's customer meeting on September 11, 2019, by a participating customer.

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COMMISSION
CLERK

WATER METERS, WATER RATE INCREASE, AND STINKY WATER

Information from your HOA BOD

There is quite a bit of misinformation floating around regarding the installation of new water meters in the park, and the upcoming water rate increase. Please share the following facts with your neighbors:

Most of the "old" meters in the park were 20-to-25 years old. The recommendation for replacement for that particular meter is 10 years. As meters age, they "slow-down", i.e., the water **pumped** is measured at a rate lower than what is actually **used**. This has been beneficial to residents, as they have been using more water than their billing reflects.

The decision to replace the meters was made when the difference between the used vs. billed amounts significantly increased over the last year. CRF knows what the total "used" is, based on what they pump into the system.

"Meter only" replacement (most residents) should be completed in September. For those who also need the installation of curb-stops (allowing house-by-house water shut-off) (approximately 100 houses), this portion of the project will be done after the meter-only portion is completed. Water will need to be shut off for a section of homes, and individual curb-stops and meters will be installed. You will be advised prior to water shut-offs.

Meter installers need to dig down to remove and replace the meters. The dirt that they dig out will be "scattered" on your lawn, so that there are no piles of dirt to kill your grass. Be aware, though, that (especially with the heavy rain lately) it won't take long for the hole to fill in again with sand (usually within a day or so).

The request by CRF to the Public Service Commission ("PSC") for a rate increase required disclosure of the meter replacement cost in addition to any increased costs to CRF to provide water. Cost for replacement of all meters in Swiss & Hidden is between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

Meter size in Swiss and Hidden is 5/8" x 3/4".

If you received a mailing regarding the increase, on the "Schedule of Present and Proposed Water Rates" page, under "Residential and General Service Base Facility Charge By Meter Size", you need only pay attention to the first line (**5/8" x 3/4"**). This line shows an increase in the Base Charge from \$4.55 to \$5.66 (+\$1.11).

Under "Charge per 1,000 gallons - Residential" - most Swiss and Hidden residents use between 3,000 and 5,000 gallons, so the top line ("0-5,000 gallons) shows an increase from \$1.14 to \$1.42 (+\$0.28 per 1,000 gallons, or +\$1.40 per 5,000 gallons).

TOTAL increase per month, if you use 5,000 gallons, would be \$2.51.

If you have (or choose to install) a separate meter for your irrigation system, the Base Facility Charge for that would be an additional \$5.66, plus \$1.54 per 1,000 gallons of usage (General Service Charge). If you wish to replace the irrigation meter, this would be at your own cost. The cost for installation or replacement of an irrigation system meter would be the homeowner's responsibility.

Some residents will notice increases higher than \$2.51. This is due to the more accurate meters reflecting your actual usage. Please check for leaks in and around your home and also check the programming of your

irrigation system (a power outage can knock your system back to a default setting so that it is watering more often and/or for longer time periods) before reporting a meter problem. Because these meters are much more accurate than the old meters, it is unlikely that the problem is at the meter, and more likely that there is another explanation. There will be time for several monthly billing cycles prior to the rate increase, so you will be able to determine your new normal usage.

The HOA BODs for both Swiss and Hidden will be establishing a Water Meter Committee to field any issues regarding the new meters and the rate increase. Committee contact information will be posted as soon as available, and we would request that you make them your primary contact with any questions or concerns.

"Stinky" water is reported every year (and throughout the year) and is primarily due to stagnant water in unused pipes. This can be due to either vacant nearby houses, or pipes in your own home - make sure to run your irrigation system periodically, even when it is not being used during the rainy season. Run BOTH of your outside hose spigots periodically (especially if you are noticing smelly water). Check your water softeners and/or home filtration systems to be sure filters are clean and they do not have standing/stagnant water. Run your EMPTY washing machine or dishwasher a time or two before using it. Please try all of these steps before calling the office.

if you are interested in information regarding water quality, reports regarding water testing for contaminants are posted at both Clubhouses.