

CITY OF AUBURN PLUMBING BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014 5:00 PM, MEMORIAL CITY HALL

Present: Frank Siracusa, Greg Gallinger, Steve Bianco, William Orman

Guests: Tom Gabak, Public Works; Vickie Murphy, Director of Municipal Utilities

Chair calls the meeting to order. Minutes of March 11, 2014 approved.

This meeting is to discuss a standard pricing on water line replacement. Please note that the board has nothing to do with the setting of any prices, it is up to the plumbers and drainlayers.

Vickie Murphy: Council passed a resolution concerning the revolving loan fund for water service replacement for the meter project. The program has been rewritten with a cap of \$9000 on sewer replacement and \$2500 on water replacement. Invoices must be itemized for reimbursement. Only residential buildings of four or more units qualify for the program. Work must be completed by June 30, 2015 to qualify for the 0% financing. Council would like two quotes for non-emergency replacement. We are looking for prices from the plumbers.

Frank Siracusa: Asks if any lines have been replaced since the last meeting.

Tom Gabak: 3 or 4 have been replaced.

Frank Siracusa: Did the City finance these?

Tom Gabak: At the time the 0% financing was not in place so those that financed were done so at 6%, others paid cash.

Frank Siracusa: Take into consideration those done before the financing available. The board cannot set prices.

Steve Bianco: Asks if the price is based on ¾" piping.

Tom Gabak: Yes.

Steve Bianco: Can't do a four unit with ¾".

Vickie Murphy: City will give 0% financing up to \$2500. Anything over that the homeowner will have to come up with or finance some other way.

Shane Stillman: Questions pricing issues for using different materials and sizes.

Tom Gabak: Concerning plastic piping, freezing is an issue.

Frank Siracusa: Also consider that anything beyond the valve the City is involved and incurs more costs.

Steve Bianco: Questions pricing in that case.

Tom Gabak: Long side is \$2000, short side is \$1500. This includes replacement and repaving.

Frank Siracusa: So flat fee of \$2500 for water?

Vickie Murphy: Yes.

Steve Bianco: It won't always be that much but the City limit is \$2500.

Dave McCullough: If piping is galvanized at the curb stop it is replaced?

Tom Gabak: Any galvanized piping 25 years or older I am obligated to replace with K copper at cost to the customer.

Frank Siracusa: Questions estimated cost of recent line replaced by Steve Bianco.

Steve Bianco: 40 – 60 feet is about \$2500 for everything.

Shane Stillman: Feels we should stick together on pricing due to the amount of jobs to be done.

Frank Siracusa: Come up with a number for City reimbursement, anything beyond that is customer's responsibility.

Shane Stillman: Does the owner need to get two prices?

Vickie Murphy: Council recommends it.

Joe D'Onofrio: Who determines which plumbers get referred?

Tom Gabak: I give anyone who calls a list of currently licensed plumbers. Our goal, with so many jobs out there, is to get a standardized price.

Vickie Murphy: Itemized bills are used for comparison. Some members of Council thinks the plumbers are ripping off the customers.

Tom Gabak: One lump sum of cash has been approved for spending. We want to be sure our residents have access to that if needed.

Frank Siracusa: The City has averaged jobs at \$2500 and set that as the maximum available for financing. The customer would need to come up with the rest some other way if needed.

Shane Stillman: Questions the itemization.

Vickie Murphy: Council requires it, they won't reimburse/pay otherwise. Verifies that the financing allowed is \$2500 at 0% for water service replacement of the meter replacement under the Meter Replacement Program only. Itemized bill is still required for this. Anything outside the program is on the homeowner at 6% if financed through the City.

Frank Siracusa: Anything else?

Vickie Murphy: Update on the project by Wendell will be this Thursday. Last I heard about 2800 meters have been replaced, about 1500 have not responded and about 480 had problems precluding replacement.

Tom Gabak: The Inline Service policy was to not have their workers replace if galvanize piping was there. City employee Tom Sawyer has been going with the workers to help with those as needed. They're trying to do the stops in the house and then at the street only if necessary.

Frank Siracusa: If a line is required to be replaced, how does the customer know who to contact?

Vickie Murphy: Inline give them an information sheet.

Tom Gabak: I tell people to contact their regular plumber or give them a list if needed.

Vickie Murphy: Other communities have added a surcharge to those who have not responded for replacement, up to double the total bill. Council is considering this and they will set any fee.

Joe D'Onofrio: Questions if the City will unfreeze lines in the winter for free?

Tom Gabak: Yes.

Joe D'Onofrio: Then why not use K copper to begin with?

Tom Gabak: We do have to tell them the downside of using plastic in replacement. Frozen meter replacement/repair is free the first time. After that there is a charge.

Shane Stillman: Questions why Inline was hired for this and not local plumbers? Why weren't the local plumbers even notified?

Vickie Murphy: This is through an energy performance contract. We hired them (Wendell), they hired Inline.

Shane Stillman: Plumbers here would have done a better job for less cost without the issues that Inline is running into.

Joe D'Onofrio: Questions why we are producing set pricing? When someone calls in they will be given a list or prices?

Shane Stillman: Standard pricing by the foot would be best.

Steve Bianco: This is the best you will get from the City.

Tom Gabak: We were hoping for a bid by the foot. Customers can still call anyone they wish but the price per foot would be standard.

Steve Bianco: There is too much to be considered. No two jobs or houses are the same.

Frank Siracuse: Anything else? Pass along this information to others.

Tom Gabak: Customers can consult with who they wish. Advise them that there is a maximum of \$2500 available with 0%.

Frank Siracusa: Thank you.

Meeting adjourned.

Recorded by Alicia McKeen