



MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Works Committee

THROUGH: Carl S. Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *g*

FROM: David P. Gorman, Asst. Director of Public Works *DPG*

SUBJECT: Proposed Code Amendment for Frozen Water Service Lines

DATE: January 5, 2015

Staff requests that the Public Works Committee review a proposed Village Code amendment to establish the Village's role in assisting with frozen water service lines.

Background:

The polar vortex of 2013-2014 caused 42 water services to freeze in the public right-of-way. Approximately half of these required digging to expose the b-box valve in the parkway in order to restore flow by steaming. In addition, a few refroze due to the customer not sustaining an adequate trickle. An additional dozen investigations had found that the freeze was on private property and, thus, did not warrant work by Village personnel. Although the deep frost experienced during that winter was rare, it is common to have a few frozen services each winter.

Although many municipal governments took a hands-off policy regarding frozen water services last winter, Lombard worked extensively over a period of five weeks to restore water to residents, including temporarily connecting hoses to neighboring houses (with permission) and crediting the neighbors for the difference in their water bill. This is the level of service that Staff would like to continue to provide.

Proposal:

The existing Village Code does not address the role of the Village or the water customer. Therefore, the Public Works Chapter of the Village Code is proposed to be amended by adding the following new subsection:

Section 51.26 "Frozen Water Service Lines"

Upon the request of a water customer, the Village's Director of Public Works, or his/her designee, shall allocate available Village personnel and resources to thaw a frozen water service line. If Village personnel determine that the water service line is frozen on private property, said Village personnel shall so advise the water customer, and take no further action. If Village personnel determine that the

water service line is frozen in the public right-of-way, then the Village personnel shall attempt to thaw the service line from the inside of the building, to which the water service line is connected, toward the water main, with the permission of the water customer. If the Village personnel are unable to thaw the water service line from the inside of the building, and it is deemed necessary by the Village personnel, the Village personnel may dig in the public right-of-way, but not on private property, to attempt to thaw the water service line. Upon the thawing of the water service line, it shall be the water customer's responsibility to keep the water running inside the building, so as to prevent the water service line from re-freezing. The Village shall credit the water customer ten dollars (\$10.00) per day for the increased water consumption, from the thawing of the water service line until the end of a period of ten (10) consecutive days during which the outdoor air temperature has reached at least thirty-two (32) degrees Fahrenheit, as determined by the Director of Public Works and communicated to the water customer (the "Credit"). Thereafter, any subsequent action by the Village to thaw the water service line during the same Winter season will only be undertaken by the Village after the water customer has agreed, in writing, to incur a five hundred dollar (\$500) per water service line thawing occurrence fee (the "Thawing Occurrence Fee"), which will be added to the water customer's water bill, and to refund any previous Credit provided to the water customer that same Winter season, with said refunded Credit amount to also be added to the water customer's water bill. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Credit shall begin to accrue anew for the water customer following the subsequent thawing of the water service line by the Village, provided the Thawing Occurrence Fee and the refund of the previous Credit have been added to the water customer's water bill.

The amount of \$500 is based on the cost to perform a subsequent dig and steaming with a crew working in previously excavated soil.

Recommendation:

Staff requests that the Committee recommend the proposed Code amendment to the Village's Board of Trustees.

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cc: Tim Sexton, Director of Finance

Jamie Cunningham, Asst. Director of Finance

Brian Jack, Utilities Superintendent