Agenda Date: 12/17/08 Agenda Item: 5A



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Board of Public Utilities
Two Gateway Center
Newark, NJ 07102
www.nj.gov/bpu

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IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF GORDON'S CORNER WATER COMPANY FOR AUTHORIZATION TO REVISE ITS TARIFF TO PROVIDE FOR MONTHLY	) ) )	ORDER AUTHORIZING MONTHLY BILLING
BILLING OF CUSTOMERS	)	BPU DOCKET NO. WT08070493

(SERVICE LIST ATTACHED)

#### BY THE BOARD:

On July 11, 2008, Gordon's Corner Water Company (Petitioner or Company), a public utility of the State of New Jersey, filed a petition with the Board of Public Utilities (Board) pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:1-5.11, for authorization to revise its existing tariff to provide for monthly billing of its customers.

Petitioner is a public water utility of the State of New Jersey that provides water service to approximately 15,000 customers in certain portions of the Townships of Manalapan and Marlboro in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

Petitioner proposes revising three current rate schedules to reflect a change from quarterly billing to monthly billing of its customers effective as of January 1, 2009. Specifically, the rate schedules affected are Rate Schedule No. 1, General Metered Service, 7<sup>th</sup> Revised Sheet No. 29; Rate Schedule No. 2, Public Fire Protection Service, 5<sup>th</sup> Revised Sheet No. 31; and Rate Schedule No. 3, Private Fire Protection Service, 6<sup>th</sup> Revised Sheet No. 32. Rate Schedule No. 3, Private Fire Protection Service currently provides for quarterly or monthly billing at the customer's option.

The Company states that tariff revisions to the three rate schedules noted above do not propose increases in rates or charges to customers, and are solely intended to implement a change from quarterly to monthly billing. According to the petition, the Company is proposing monthly billing to help customers budget for and better manage the payment of utility bills, and to promote conservation. The Company maintains that with monthly billing, customers will have access to more current information about their water usage than would otherwise be available with quarterly billing, and such information can provide an opportunity to conserve water by adjusting or modifying consumption habits, particularly during summer months. In addition, monthly

billing will improve Petitioner's cash flow and allow it to recover monthly purchased water costs on a more current basis. The Company also believes it will be in a better position to address any changes in unaccounted for water by matching water sales to system delivery on a monthly basis.

The Company utilizes the billing services of Utility Business Services (UBS) for billing its customers. The Company anticipates an increase in expenses in the amount of \$54,015 per year related to UBS services because of the switch from quarterly to monthly billing of customers. Based upon 15,000 customers, this increase in billing service costs equates to approximately \$3.60 per year per customer. The Company states that it will book these expenses in the calendar year incurred to billing service expense, Account Number 903008, and that it is not requesting a deferral of these expenses. Petitioner further states that, other than the UBS cost, it does not anticipate any additional expenses or the need to hire additional personnel because of the proposed switch from quarterly to monthly billing.

By letter dated October 28, 2008, the Department of the Public Advocate, Division of Rate Counsel notified the Board that it has reviewed the petition and supporting documents and is not opposed to its approval.

The Board, after investigation, review of the record to this proceeding including consideration of the petition and exhibits submitted in this proceeding, as well as supplemental information provided by the Petitioner, <u>HEREBY FINDS</u> that the Company's petition was not filed because of the need for additional revenues from services covered by the Company's existing tariff and does not propose increases in charges to customers. Additionally, the Board <u>HEREBY FINDS</u> that the move from quarterly to monthly billing will provide customers with more current information about their usage and thereby provide an opportunity to conserve water, and also allow the Company to meet its purchased water costs on a more current basis. Accordingly, the Board <u>HEREBY APPROVES</u> Petitioner's request to switch from quarterly to monthly billing of its customers effective January 1, 2009.

The approval granted herein shall be subject to the following provisions:

- 1 This Order shall not affect nor in any way limit the exercise of authority of this Board, or this State, in any future petition or in any proceeding with respect to rates, franchises, services, financing, capitalization, depreciation, or any other matters affecting the Petitioner.
- 2 Approval of the switch from quarterly to monthly billing does not constitute Board approval of any costs or expenses associated with this petition or the change in billing frequency. Any determination as to the appropriateness or reasonableness of the costs and expenses related to the switch from quarterly to monthly billing shall be made in an appropriate subsequent proceeding. Petitioner shall maintain its records in such a manner that costs related to the switch from quarterly to monthly billing can be determined.
- 3. Petitioner shall provide individual notice by first class mail to all of its customers in advance of the January 1, 2009 effective date, and provide proof of such mailings to the Board within ten (10) days of such mailing.

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4 Petitioner shall submit revised pages for Rate Schedule No. 1, 2, and 3 reflecting the change in billing of its customer from quarterly to monthly within ten (10) days of the date of this Order.

DATED: 12/18/08

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES** BY:

FREDERICK F. BUTLER

COMMISSIONER

NICHOLAS ASSELTA **COMMISSIONER** 

OSEPH L. FIORDALISO /COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

KRISTI IZZO **SECRETARY** 

> I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within document is a true copy of the original in the files of the Board of Public

Utilities

# IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF GORDON'S CORNER WATER COMPANY FOR AUTHORIZATION TO REVISE ITS TARIFF TO PROVIDE FOR MONTHLY BILLING OF CUSTOMERS

### BPU DOCKET NO. WT08070493

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