



Agenda Date: 9/16/09
Agenda Item: 7A

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

CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF UNITED)	ORDER OF APPROVAL
WATER NEW JERSEY INC., FOR APPROVAL)	
PURSUANT TO <u>N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(E)</u> TO CLOSE)	
ITS CUSTOMER PAYMENT CENTER IN)	
LAMBERTVILLE, NEW JERSEY)	DOCKET NO. WE09060437

(SERVICE LIST ATTACHED)

BY THE BOARD:

This matter concerns a request by United Water New Jersey, Inc. ("UWNJ" or "Company"), a water company doing business in the State of New Jersey, with its principal office at 200 Old Hook Road, Harrington Park, NJ 07640, for approval to close a payment center currently located at 26 Coryell Street, Lambertville, New Jersey 08530 ("Coryell Street Office" or "Payment Center").

On June 3, 2009, UWNJ filed a verified petition, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e), seeking Board approval to close the Coryell Street Office. In support of its proposal, the Company asserts that the closure of the Payment Center is necessary, because the nominal services offered at the location do not justify the expense of continuing to maintain the Payment Center, which was open only for the acceptance of payments. Furthermore, the Company argues that by closing the Payment Center, the Company may eliminate unnecessary expenses while maintaining the same level of high quality customer service.

Additionally, only one temporary employee occupies the Coryell Street Office, who accepts approximately three to four payments per week. According to the petition, this employee has never been trained or authorized to handle customer service inquiries, and this employee has been instructed to direct any customers with inquiries to the Company's main Customer Service Center located in Hackensack, New Jersey. The Company also asserts that the Payment Center is open for four hours daily, Monday through Friday, and at least half of all payments received at the Payment Center are submitted outside of office hours as customers are able to drop their payments through a depository opening in the office door.

UWNJ states that local payment options are available. The Company has set up a payment drop box at Lambertville City Hall, which is located approximately one block (550 feet) from the current Payment Center. The drop box was set up to allow Lambertville customers who prefer dropping off their payments at the Payment Center to continue making their payments in person, as they are accustomed. Additionally, the Company provides that the Company's Web

site address and Customer Service Center telephone number will be displayed on the Lambertville City Hall drop box.

In addition to the Lambertville City Hall drop box, the Company states that it also offers alternative payment options. UWNJ offers an "ePay program," whereby customers can have their payments directly debited from the bank accounts, while still receiving a copy of their paper bill for their files; "eBilling program," whereby customers can forgo paper bills and obtain their bills electronically via email; and customers can always pay their bill online via the UWNJ website through Western Union Speedpay. UWNJ explained that there are no costs associated with either the ePay or eBilling programs, but customers opting to pay their bills by credit or debit card are charged a convenience fee of \$5.00.

As required by N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e), the Company has mailed copies of the petition to the clerks of the affected municipalities and to the Department of Public Advocate, Division of Rate Counsel ("Rate Counsel"). Notice was also placed at the Coyrell Street Office and published in the local newspapers serving the affected area, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e).

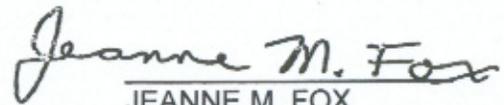
Rate Counsel, in a letter dated August 18, 2009, stated that, based on the facts and circumstances contained in the petition, it does not oppose UWNJ's request for authorization to close the Payment Center. In addition, Rate Counsel has not received any customer objections to the proposed closure of the Payment Center.

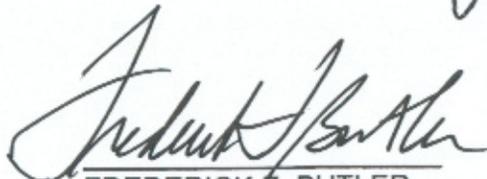
The Board notes that it has received no letters in opposition to the closure of the Coyrell Street Office. UWNJ also states that it has received no objections from customers to the proposed Payment Center closure.

Accordingly, based upon a review of the petition and supporting documentation, the Board FINDS that the proposed payment center closing will not adversely affect UWNJ customers. Therefore, the Board HEREBY ORDERS that UWNJ is authorized to close its Lambertville Payment Center located at 26 Coryell Street, Lambertville, New Jersey 08530.

DATED: 9/16/09

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:


JEANNE M. FOX
PRESIDENT

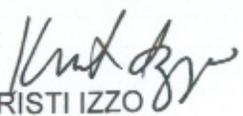

FREDERICK F. BUTLER
COMMISSIONER

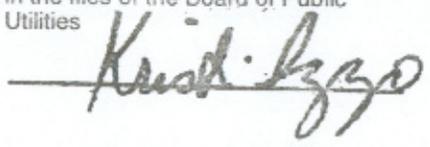

JOSEPH L. FIORDALISO
COMMISSIONER


NICHOLAS ASSELTA
COMMISSIONER


ELIZABETH RANDALL
COMMISSIONER

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

ATTEST: 
KRISTI IZZO
SECRETARY



**I/M/O The Petition of United Water New Jersey Inc., for Approval Pursuant to
N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e) to Close its Customer payment Center in Lambertville, New
Jersey**

DOCKET NUMBER WE09060437

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