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January 30, 2023

Ms. A. Shonta Dunston
Chief Clerk
North Carolina Utilities Commission
4326 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4300
Via electronic filing only

RE: Water Resources, Inc.'s Report on Efforts to Create a Website, form a Customer Advisory Group, and Other Means to Improve Customer Communications (W-1034, Sub 8 and 10)

Dear Ms. Dunston,

Please accept for filing in the above-captioned dockets Water Resources, Inc.'s Report on Efforts to Create a Website, form a Customer Advisory Group, and Other Means to Improve Customer Communications.

Should you have any questions regarding this filing, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

/s/ Patrick Buffkin

Patrick Buffkin

Buffkin Law Office

Counsel for Water Resources, Inc.

OFFICIAL COPY

Jan 30 2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH

DOCKET NO. W-1034, SUB 8

DOCKET NO. W-1034, SUB 10

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. W-1034, SUB 8)

In the Matter of)
Application by Water Resources, Inc., for)
Authority to Increase Rates for Water Utility)
Service in Rocky River Plantation Subdivision in)
Cabarrus County and River Walk Subdivision in)
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina)

DOCKET NO. W-1034, SUB 10)

In the Matter of)
Lenny DeVitto, 8529 Indian Summer Trail,)
Harrisburg, North Carolina 28075,)

Complainant)

v.)

Water Resources, Inc.,)

Respondent)

WATER RESOURCES, INC.’S
REPORT ON EFFORTS TO
CREATE A WEBSITE, FORM A
CUSTOMER ADVISORY
GROUP, AND OTHER MEANS
TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER
COMMUNICATIONS

NOW COMES Respondent Water Resources, Inc. (“Water Resources” or “the Company”), by and through the undersigned counsel and pursuant to Ordering Paragraph No. 4 of the Commission’s *Order Requiring Compliance with 2018 Rate Case Order and DEQ Notices of Violation and Consent Judgment and Requiring Filing of Further Reports*, issued in this proceeding on July 29, 2022 (“July 29 Order”), and files this Report on the Company’s efforts to create a website, form a customer advisory group, and other means to improve customer communications (“Report”). Water Resources respectfully requests that the Commission accept

this Report in compliance with the July 29 Order. In support thereof, Water Resources respectfully shows unto the Commission as follows:

Report on Water Resources' Efforts to Create a website, form a Customer Advisory Group, and to otherwise institute means to obtain customer feedback and improve communications between Water Resources and its customers.

1. Pursuant to Ordering Paragraph No. 4 of the July 29 Order, the Company is required to file in these dockets on or before January 30, 2023, “a report on its efforts to create a website, form a customer advisory group, or otherwise institute means to obtain customer feedback and improve communication between WRI and its customers, specifically including notice of flushing activities.”

2. Since the Commission issued the July 29 Order, the Company has continued to undertake efforts to improve customer communications and the broader customer experience in both Rocky River Plantation and River Walk Subdivisions, as directed by the Commission and as further detailed herein.

3. With respect to the creation of a website, the Company has obtained a quote from and selected a contract service provider to build a website that will include the ability for customers to review and pay their account balances online. The Company anticipates that the website will be introduced to customers by September 1, 2023.

4. With respect to the formation of a customer advisory group, the Company notes the following discussion in the Commission’s July 29 Order:

The Commission has experience with addressing similar customer concerns in other cases. For example, Aqua North Carolina, Inc. (Aqua), implemented a number of measures to improve communication with its customers, in part to provide better notice regarding flushing activity. Aqua established an advisory group for

its largest and most complex public water system comprised of Aqua staff and nine customers to discuss various topics from water quality, operations, flushing efforts, educational materials, and other items. The feedback from customers has been utilized to update processes and improve communications. Aqua posts updated weekly schedules on its website and uses increased local signage at community entrances and exits for awareness of flushing activities while a campaign is in progress. The Commission recognizes that these efforts have provided significant benefits to both Aqua and its customers.

July 29 Order, at p. 12 (footnote omitted).

The Company considered the necessary arrangements for formation and operation of a customer advisory group, and, after thorough evaluation and careful consideration determined that a more efficient method of achieving the benefits of a formal customer advisory group was available and already in use, namely, ongoing, regular communications with River Walk HOA and a group of homeowners in Rocky River Plantation who have expressed interest in being involved in these matters. The Company found that these existing communication channels accomplish the same function of a customer advisory group, although not named as such, by providing a means to poll the members of these two representative groups regarding their experiences with water pressure, water quality, and other issues related to the Company's operations. With respect to River Walk, communications with the HOA leadership provides a representative group of customers that was presumably selected by the other members of the HOA through a democratic process built into the HOA governance structure. With respect to Rocky River, the Company proactively contacts this group of customers to gain insights into their experience and those of their neighbors, and any concerns brought to the Company's attention are addressed and a follow up with the homeowner is provided. Again, while not formally named a customer advisory group, Water Resources has found that these communication channels achieve the same benefits of forming a

customer advisory group and believes that these efforts have contributed to improved customer communications overall in the Rocky River Plantation Subdivision.

5. With respect to system flushing, the Company only performs system flushing on an as needed basis. The need for flushing during the last six months, since the Commission issued its July 29 Order, has been limited and the Company has not received reports of discolored water from customers. Water Resources will continue to make every attempt to alert customers when flushing is necessary and to limit the disruption to customers that flushing activities may cause.

6. Finally, the Company notes that it continues to file quarterly customer contact logs with the Commission in Docket No. W-1034, Sub 8. The Company believes that these customer contact logs demonstrate a continued improvement in customer service and an increasing level of satisfaction with Water Resources responsiveness and resolution of concerns.

WHEREFORE, Water Resources respectfully requests that the Commission accept this report in compliance with Ordering Paragraph No. 4 of the Commission's *Order Requiring Compliance with 2018 Rate Case Order and DEQ Notices of Violation and Consent Judgment and Requiring Filing of Further Reports*, issued in this proceeding on July 29, 2022.

Respectfully submitted this 30th day of January, 2023.

/s/ Patrick Buffkin
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Counsel for Water Resources, Inc.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing WATER RESOURCES, INC.'S REPORT ON EFFORTS TO CREATE A WEBSITE, FORM A CUSTOMER ADVISORY GROUP, AND OTHER MEANS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS has been served by electronic delivery upon the parties of record.

This the 30th day of January, 2023.

/s/ Patrick Buffkin
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