

From: Dymian Racoma <dracoma@hbws.org>
Date: March 19, 2013, 11:01:30 AM HST
To: "carroll@carrollcox.com" <carroll@carrollcox.com>
Subject: RE: Request for information on CC&B, AMR and billing.

Dear Mr. Cox:

Thank you for your email to the Board of Water Supply (BWS) regarding the recently implemented Customer Care and Billing (CC&B) system.

The implementation of CC&B was done because the BWS needed to replace its aging customer information system, which was installed in 1997, to continue to provide effective customer service. The previous system was developed in-house using Software AG Adabas/Natural. The move to the new system offered the opportunity to also move to monthly billing. As a result, on January 22, 2013, when the BWS switched to CC&B, it also started phasing in monthly billing. The transition will take about three months to complete.

The BWS expects the change to monthly billing will lead to more timely information and better customer service by:

- * Allowing the customer to better align his/her payment with other bill schedules.
- * Providing more frequent consumption data to help make adjustments to water use.
- * Helping to identify unusual water usage such as property leaks, allowing for prompt repairs, and thereby reducing the magnitude of high bills caused by leaks.

In conjunction with the launch of CC&B, the BWS now offers customers the ability to view their bill online through a link on its website at www.boardofwatersupply.com. This feature provides customers with online access to their bills and bill history. Customers can also choose to "go green" by signing up for paperless billing and email bill notification. Additional customer service options such as online bill payment via credit card are in the process of being fully implemented.

The CC&B vendor has not advised the BWS of any specific problems with the software. As with any mainstream "off-the-shelf" software package, there will be occasional software patches and version/releases that may need to be applied. Since the launch of CC&B, the BWS has been performing daily checks and conducts quality assurance and control activities to assure system accuracy and integrity. The results of these tests achieved the following:

- * Methodically validated that input/output transactions were created, accounted for, balanced and processed properly.
- * Validated bills for each rate and customer class for bill calculation, accuracy and consistency.
- * Reviewed a subset of bills and verified it prior to printing and mailing.
- * Monitored accounts identified by the system that required review and completion.
- * Provided daily oversight and transaction review.
- * Closely monitored meter reading, billing cycles and schedules.
- * Ran integrity check scripts to ensure transactions and record counts matched.
- * Validated reference and historical data.

With the implementation of monthly billing, the BWS issues approximately 170,000 bills per month or approximately 2 million bills each year. The BWS categorizes its customers into the following types: residential, multi-family, non-residential, agricultural, recycled, and non-potable. As a result of these categorizations, the BWS does not have billing information available specifically for Federal and commercial businesses.

The BWS has been conducting estimated reads since the original billing system was developed. An estimated bill, which is based on a customer's recent water consumption, is created if for some reason the BWS is unable to obtain a proper read. Approximately two percent of all bills are estimated. Under the previous system, all estimated bills were for periods longer than 30 to 45 days of service because bills were generated once every two months. With CC&B, which bills on a monthly basis, the allotted timeframe for an estimated bill is no more than 34 days of service.

If a meter is not reading properly, a follow up read will be conducted on the next working day to minimize the probability of an estimated bill being generated. There are a number of factors that contribute to an improper read such as weather and environmental conditions, the meters being inaccessible due to obstructions, or meters that may need maintenance or repair.

The BWS is working to reduce the amount of improper reads. The BWS is currently working to replace approximately 60,000 water meter batteries throughout Oahu. These batteries were nearing the end of their service lifespan. Since February, on average approximately 5,000 batteries are being replaced each week. The BWS anticipates this project will be completed around April 2013. This project, however, is only part of the solution as the BWS could also use some assistance from the public to not obstruct the meters. It is common for members of the public to park their vehicles, or place large objects, and temporary or permanent structures on top of the meters making it very difficult to find, access, and obtain reads.

The BWS currently has 15 Meter Readers. The Meter Readers check and/or read approximately 8,500 water meters each day, of which roughly 994 meters are read manually.

BWS has seven water meter mechanics. The number of meters they work on each day varies by the size of the meter, the physical condition of the meter and its components, whether the meter can be repaired or needs to be replaced. If a meter can be repaired, the BWS determines what type of repair is required.

The BWS has no knowledge or record of Ms. Uyesugi being a Trustee with Bowers + Kubota Consulting. Her original date of hire with the BWS was June 1, 1981.

Mahalo,

Dymian Racoma
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-----Original Message-----

From: Carroll Cox [<mailto:carroll@carrollcox.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 11:34 AM
To: Communications
Subject: Request for information on CC&B, AMR and billing.

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to ask your assistance in obtaining answers to the following questions regarding billing for water use in Honolulu. More specifically, I am interested in the Board of Water Supply's use of Computer Estimates, Automatic Meter Readers, Customer Care Billing Systems, Electric Communications Register and Manual Readers:

When did the B.W.S. start using the C C & B software(date) and why?

What was the type of software used prior the C C & B software?

How many residential properties does the B.W.S. bill?

How many bills go out per month to residences?

How many bills with Computer Estimates are relied on monthly or annually?

When did B.W.S. start using Computer Estimates for residences?

Do any of the Computer Estimates go longer than 30 to 45 days?

What is the accepted length of time for use of the Computer Estimates?

I would also like to ask the same above questions regarding all federal and commercial properties.

How many Manual Meter Readers does the B.W.S. employ? How many meters are they required to manually check per day, month or billing period?

How many Meter Mechanics are employed by the B.W.S.? How many meters are they required

to manually check and fix per day, month or billing period?

Since the implementation of the CC & B software, how many broken or malfunctioning meters per month have been reported?

Has the developer of the CC & B software advised the B.W.S of any problems with the software? If yes, please provide copies of their advisories, email, letters or other written notifications.

Has the B. W. S. conducted a proficiency or integrity study of the CC & B system after startup date?

Regarding Ms. Susan S. Uyesugi, a search of the internet found that Ms. Susan S. Uyesugi is listed on Zoom Info as a trustee with Bowers + Kubota Consulting. was she ever a Trustee with Bowers + Kubota Consulting? If yes please provide time of service as Trustee. If she served as Trustee and the Trusteeship has been terminated what is the termination date? What is her original date of hire with the B.W.S.?

Thank you,

Carroll cox