

# Louisiana Public Service Commission



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March 16, 2022

## VIA EMAIL

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2022 MAR 16 AM 9:07  
LA PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION

**RE: Docket No. S-36214, Greater Ouachita Water Company, ex parte. In re: Request for Amendment to Tariff for Water Services to (i) Add Non-Recurring Charge for Damage to AMI Meter, (ii) Clarify Language of Meter Tampering Fee Provision, and (iii) Increase Non-Recurring Contractor Hydrant Meter and Wrench Deposit.**

Ms. Tournillon:

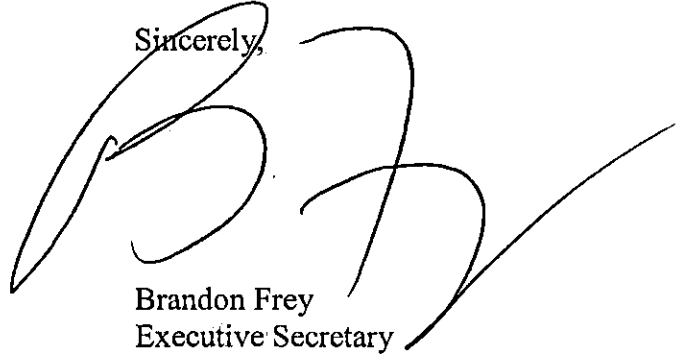
This letter is in response to correspondence to the Commission dated December 7, 2021 in which you requested, on behalf of Greater Ouachita Water Company ("GOWC"), Commission's approval to add non-recurring charge for damage to AMI Meter, clarify language of meter tampering fee provision, and increase non-recurring contractor hydrant meter and wrench deposit.

After review of your correspondence, the answers to Staff's data request, and discussions between you and Commission Staff, it was determined that GOWC will amend its tariff to add non-recurring charge for damage to the AMI meter, clarify the language of the meter tampering fee provision, and increase the non-recurring contractor hydrant meter and wrench deposit from \$300 to \$1,500. GOWC shall submit a revised tariff to the Utilities Division of the Louisiana Public Service Commission reflecting the changes described above within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

Based on the foregoing, the Commission expresses no opposition to GOWC's request to add a non-recurring charge for damage to AMI meters, clarify the language of the meter tampering fee provisions, and increase the non-recurring contractor hydrant meter and wrench deposit on its tariff.

This action of the Commission is done without prejudice to the authority of the Commission to make investigation and require any reasonably necessary change it may legally find to be in the public interest. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (225) 342-4999.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a series of connected strokes that end in a long, sweeping tail.

Brandon Frey  
Executive Secretary

cc: Service List (via email)

**BEFORE THE  
LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**DOCKET NO. S-36214**

**GREATER OUACHITA WATER COMPANY,  
EX PARTE.**

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***In Re: Request for Amendment to Tariff for Water Services to (i) Add Non-Recurring Charge for Damage to AMI Meter, (ii) Clarify Language of Meter Tampering Fee Provision, and (iii) Increase Non-Recurring Contractor Hydrant Meter and Wrench Deposit.***

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**STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Overview**

On December 07, 2021, Greater Ouachita Water Company, (“GOWC” or the “Company”) filed the above-captioned request (“Request”) with the Louisiana Public Service Commission (“LPSC” or the “Commission”). The Request seeks Commission approval<sup>1</sup> to amend its Tariff for Residential, Domestic, and Commercial Water Services (“Water Tariff”) to add a non-recurring charge for damage to advance meter infrastructure (“AMI”) equipment meters (“AMI Meter Damage Fee”), clarify language of the Meter Tampering Fee Provision, and to increase non-recurring charge for Contractor Hydrant Meter and Wrench Deposit (“Contractor Hydrant Fee”). The Request was published in the Official Commission Bulletin #1260 on December 10, 2021 for a fifteen (15) day intervention period, which expired without intervention.

In an effort to provide notice to GOWC’s customers, notice of the Request was published in the official journal of the Parish of Ouachita, *The Ouachita Citizen*, and the official state journal, *The Advocate*, in accordance with Article 4, Section 21 (D)(1) of the Louisiana Constitution. GOWC is a non-profit jurisdictional public utility, in good standing, incorporated in the City of Monroe, Parish of Ouachita, State of Louisiana, by instrument dated May 30, 1963. GOWC provides water and wastewater services, including potable water production, treatment, storage, and distribution and water collection, transport, and treatment to approximately 21,123 residential

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Section 1101(D) of LPSC General Order No. R-34120, dated July 26, 2017.

customers and 1,091 commercial customers. GOWC's principal place of business is located at 1869 Avenue of America Suite B, Monroe, Louisiana 71201.

### **Company's Request**

GOWC is seeking to obtain a Letter of Non-Opposition to amend the Company's Residential, Domestic, and Commercial Water Services ("Water Tariff")<sup>2</sup> to add a non-recurring charge for damage to advance meter infrastructure ("AMI") equipment meters ("AMI Meter Damage Fee"), clarify language of the Meter Tampering Fee Provision, and to increase non-recurring charge for Contractor Hydrant Meter and Wrench Deposit ("Contractor Hydrant Fee").

According to GOWC's application for this request, the Company has experienced a high volume of service calls involving damage to AMI meters that have been installed at customer premises over the last couple of years. In an instance that an AMI needs to be replaced, administrative and material costs are incurred. The Company currently does not have authority to recover the costs associated with damaged AMI meters. In order to recover the expenses associated with administrative and material costs imposed by damaged AMI meters, GOWC is requesting authority to revise its Water Tariff to read.

#### **(12) Advanced Metering Infrastructure ("AMI" Meter Damage Fee:**

This fee is charged when the AMI metering equipment, including but not limited to the register, transmitter, and/or lid/box, is damaged by the customer, requiring replacement or repair. The customer will be charged \$50.00 and, if replacement is required, the cost of all materials. Meter tampering by the customer after the meter is locked and disconnected, by-passing a meter, or by otherwise tampering and/or vandalizing the meter, meter box, or service line is subject to the Meter Tampering Fee, pursuant to Paragraph 11, above.

GOWC also requests to clarify the language of the existing Meter Tampering Fee Provision of their tariff to read:

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<sup>2</sup> GOWC's Water Tariff, which was implemented on April 22, 2019, was approved by the LPSC in Docket No. U-34865.

(11) Meter Tampering Fee:

This fee is charged when it has been determined a customer tampered with a water meter after they are locked and disconnected, bypassing a meter, or otherwise tampering and/or vandalizing the meter, meter box, or service line. The customer will be charged \$100.00 plus the cost of the meter and other materials, if replacement is required.

Finally, GOWC requests authority to increase non-recurring charge for Contractor Hydrant Deposit from \$300 to \$1,500. GOWC currently charges a refundable deposit of \$300 from Contractors, who seek to use fire hydrants, to make use of a Contractor Hydrant Meter and fire hydrant wrench. The fire hydrant wrench and meter cost \$1,500. GOWC seeks to increase the deposit cost to ensure the return of the loaned equipment from Contractors.

**Commission Authority**

The Commission exercises jurisdiction over public utilities and common carriers in Louisiana pursuant to Article IV, Section 21(B) of the Louisiana Constitution, which states the following:

The commission shall regulate all common carriers and public utilities and have such other regulatory authority as provided by law. It shall adopt and enforce reasonable rules, regulations and procedures necessary for the discharge of its duties, and shall have other powers and perform other duties as provided by law.

**Staff Review**

Staff reviewed the filings, including accompanying exhibits. Based upon the information provided by GOWC, Staff requested information through a formal data request on January 12, 2022. GOWC furnished Staff with detailed evidence and responses to the data requests on January 20, 2022. Staff conducted a thorough review of all of the responses and the information provided by GOWC. Staff also reviewed the ratemaking treatment of GOWC and its historical filings with the LPSC.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Based on the foregoing, Staff concurs that the Request is in the public interest; therefore, Staff recommends the Commission express its non-opposition to the Request authorizing GOWC to implement the requested proposed changes to the Water Tariff.

1. GOWC shall add a non-recurring charge for damage to advance meter infrastructure (“AMI”) equipment meters (“AMI Meter Damage Fee”) in accordance to the proposed revised Water Tariff submitted in this request.
2. GOWC shall clarify language of the Meter Tampering Fee Provision in accordance to the proposed revised Water Tariff submitted in this request.
3. GOWC shall increase non-recurring deposit for Contractor Hydrant Meter and Wrench Deposit (“Contractor Hydrant Fee”) from \$300 to \$1500 in accordance to the proposed revised Water Tariff submitted in this request.
4. GOWC shall submit to the Commission’s Utilities Division revised water rate schedules reflecting the changes authorized herein within thirty (30) days of receipt of this letter.

**Service List for S-36214  
as of 3/16/2022**

**Commissioner(s)**

Foster L. Campbell

**LPSC Staff Counsel**

Arvind Viswanathan, LPSC Staff Attorney

**LPSC Staff**

Don Dewald, LPSC Utilities Division

Peggy Schwander, LPSC Auditing Division

**Petitioner : Greater Ouachita Water Company**

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