

TO: Personnel Board

FROM: Emaan Abdel-Halim, Human Resources

DATE: 22 February 2013

SUBJECT: Administrative Clerk I - Water Utility

Madison Water Utility has requested a study of two (2) Administrative Clerk I positions (Compensation Group 20, Range 9) which provide support to the Customer Service and Billing Section of the Water Utility. One position currently supports customer service & billing activities (position # to be determined upon selection), while the other supports meter shop scheduling and repairs (position #1874, vacant). As part of Project H₂O, the implementation of the new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system, Madison Water will now obtain automated, remote meter readings to more regularly and accurately monitor residential and commercial water usage. Additionally, residents can also monitor their usage online, and the Utility can identify potential leaks and/or repairs with these new systems. This AMI and supporting softwares are major upgrades for the Water Utility by allowing for remote meter readings on a monthly basis, and subsequently transition the City to a monthly billing cycle. As a result, the current Customer Service Section structure needs to accommodate the new workload from the upgraded systems. After several discussions with the Customer Service Manager, Robin Piper; General Manager, Tom Heikkinen; City Water consultant, Tom Nennig; AFSCME Staff Representative, Jennifer McCulley; and Local 60 steward, Rick Marx; and upon reviewing the duties and responsibilities in the proposed position descriptions; I conclude that the two (2) Administrative Clerk I positions in the Water Utility – Customer Service Section be recreated as Program Assistant I (Compensation Group 20, Range 11). The Union has agreed to allow these positions to be posted internally to the Water Utility in order to minimize the potential for displacement. This memo will outline the justification for this recommendation.

Currently, the Water Utility bills customers on a bi-annual basis and this process requires that one-sixth of the City's resident receive bills every month. This process also requires meter readers to physically visit all of the City's water remote reading registers every six (6) months to obtain accurate water usage readings. In 2012, the Water Utility processed 149,082 regular bills (or approximately 12,500 per month) and conducted 129,970 meter reads over the entire year. The current Customer Service Section is composed of one (1) Leadworker to oversee the entire billing operation, three (3) Administrative Clerks that assist with customer billing and inquiries, and two (2) Administrative Clerk to assist with meter repair and scheduling. With the new system, bill processing will increase six fold with 74,500 bills produced monthly. Additionally, the need for meter repairs will decrease dramatically since the AMI system has included upgrading all residences with new metering equipment. This reduces the need for the Administrative Clerks who were scheduling repairs to the residential meters. The new meters have an average lifespan of 20 years and will be replaced at the end of 20 years.

A review of the class specification for Administrative Clerk I (see attached) shows:

... responsible administrative support work in the **implementation and coordination of a specified office function** necessitating judgment, discretion, and initiative in the interpretation and application of program policies, procedures and processes. [Emphasis added]

A review of the class specification for a Program Assistant I indicates this is responsible administrative support and advanced-level secretarial and/or programmatic work involving

... **programmatic recordkeeping and reporting; performance and/or coordination of specialized program functions;** and/or direct involvement in budget development and monitoring. [Emphasis added]

In addition, positions in the classification are normally supervised by a department, division, or program head.

With the new AMI system, the changing needs and workloads of the Customer Service Section require a new structure to ensure efficient and accurate completion of these new job duties. The new monthly bill processing will require this section to produce roughly 74,500 bills every month. The Leadworker is responsible for all the operational activities of performing this complex task, and will require a full time assistant in the management of these operational activities as a result of the increased volume of bills every month. Additionally, the remaining three (3) Administrative Clerks will continue to assist with bill processing and customer service inquiries to the Water Utility. This proposed Billing Assistant position would be classified as a Program Assistant I due to the higher technical level of work involved with the upgraded software systems associated with the monthly billing process. Additionally, this Program Assistant I position would serve as backup in the absence of the Leadworker. The second proposed Program Assistant I position would primarily be responsible for coordinating meter service scheduling (some residential, but primarily commercial meters) using the newly integrated Field Deployment Manger (FDM) software; in addition to serving as a backup for the Billing Assistant. The new proposed structure would be as follows: one (1) Leadworker, two (2) Program Assistants (working titles: Billing Assistant and FDM Assistant), and three (3) Administrative Clerks. The new staffing structure will have the two (2) Program Assistants cross-trained on each others' responsibilities, while remaining primarily focused on their respective customer billing and meter service scheduling duties.

In reviewing the classification of Program Assistant I, I found the duties these positions are expected to perform indeed fall within the advanced level administrative support work that involves performing specialized program functions. For instance, the Billing Assistant will be required to be proficient with the new Meter Data Management (MDM) software in order to run reports, analyze data, coordinate with Field Service Representative (FSR) to collect meter reads from opt-out customers or non-reporting meters, and upload meter readings to prepare billing statements. The FDM Assistant would be responsible for coordinating the work orders for FSRs, scheduling field investigations, meter installations, changes and testing. All of this work would primarily be conducted with the Field Deployment Manager software and supporting handheld units for the FSRs. Both of these proposed Program Assistant I positions will require a higher level of software proficiency than the Administrative Clerk I positions,

which will mostly be interfacing with the software to enter data as required to produce bills and record payments.

It is apparent from the description above that these positions' main function is to provide high level support to the Water Utility's Customer Service section. This is the reason the Program Assistant classification exists, to recognize those positions which provide significant support to a department/division program. An Administrative Clerk I may provide bits and pieces of support to different office functions, such as doing payroll or tracking purchase orders. However, the Program Assistant classification is distinguished by the wide variety of administrative, secretarial, and program support functions incumbents are expected to perform. This requires more in-depth knowledge of the program in question and allows the position to function with a higher degree of independence. This is consistent with the Program Assistant I description that "...programmatic recordkeeping and reporting; performance and/or coordination of specialized program functions." For these reasons, I recommend the positions be recreated as Program Assistant I. The internal posting to the Water Utility will minimize any displacement issues that may result.

We have prepared the necessary Resolution to implement this recommendation

Editor's Note:

Compensation Group/Range	2013 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2013 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2013 Annual Maximum +12% longevity
20/09	\$39,292	\$44,178	\$49,478
20/11	\$41,685	\$46,660	\$52,260

cc: Tom Heikkinen – Water Utility General Manager
Robin Piper – Customer Service Manager
Greg Leifer – Employee and Labor Relations Manager
Jennifer McCulley – AFSCME Local 60 Staff Representative
Rick Marx – Local 60 Union Steward