

To the Town Council of Gate City, Virginia
January 12, 2010

We own a house at 268 Blackberry Lane, Gate City. We lived there from May 1999 through July 2008 and paid for water/sewer/trash service in a timely manner. We moved to Hiltons at the end of July 2008 but continued to maintain the town's service for our house in Gate City through 2008 and into January 2009.

In January of 2009, we leased the house and our tenant opened his own account with the town. The tenant moved out on December 1 of 2009. He says that he did not close his account for several days after he left town but we have no knowledge of that.

On Friday Dec. 12, we asked the town to put the account back in our name. In a conversation with Mr. Templeton, the town manager, we ^{was} informed that there was a \$150 deposit fee, but that it sometimes was waived. (We had just had a simple transaction with AEP in which they promptly waived the required deposit due to our credit status with them) We were told by Gate City officials that a \$50 charge would be required to "switch over."

On Monday, December 15, the town employee informed us that we were not eligible to have the \$150 deposit policy waived. We had decided that, if that was the case, we could not afford the \$200 at the moment and would have to defer the service to a later date. I asked for return of the check for \$50 written on the 12th. The town employee reached under the counter as if to hand me the check, at which point she was told by another town employee that the check "WOULD HAVE TO BE MAILED."

The following week, as we waited to receive our \$50 check or a refund check from the town, we instead received a FINAL BILL, charging the following for the period of 12/11/09-12/14/09: \$1.50 for water, \$1.50 for sewer, and \$7.00 for garbage. None of these services was provided as the account was never set up.

Included in the letter with the FINAL BILL was a Copy of SECTION XIV Schedule of Fees and Charges, clearly stating the town's policy requiring the \$50 service charge and the \$150 deposit. Fair enough. But, interestingly, someone had hand written beside the \$50 Service Charge item: non-refundable.

It doesn't make a lot of sense that we are charged \$10 for services that were never provided because an account was never set up and the town is \$50 to the good anyway because of someone's decision that the \$50 was non-refundable.

1. We would like the Town Council to give consideration to the request to have the \$150 deposit waived.
2. If we are deemed not eligible for that waiver, we would ask you to review the handwritten policy on SECTION XIV that the service charge is non-refundable.
3. If you find that the handwritten, no-refund policy is the official policy of the town, we would respectfully request that the \$10 charge for services not provided by the town be dropped.

Our house ~~is~~ for sale. It is a bit challenging to be enthusiastic about the desirability of living in Gate City when we have, frankly, been made to feel that someone at the town hall is determined to use every available "policy" to make us feel you would prefer that we were no longer among you.

Robert Q. Barker
Ellen C. Barker



