



Borough of Chambersburg

*A full service municipality in Franklin County
celebrating over 65 years of consumer owned natural gas service
over 100 years of community electric and a
regional wastewater, water, and municipal solid waste utility*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAMBERSBURG EXPLAINS LANDLORD TENANT SHUT OFF POLICIES

Chambersburg – On Tuesday July 15, 2014, the Borough of Chambersburg was asked to respond to a request for information regarding the Borough's Landlord Utility disconnection and payment policies: ultimately the property owner is responsible for the payment of all utilities. We bill tenants as a convenience for the property owners.

If the tenant does not pay, for whatever reason, after reasonable attempts to collect, the bill gets sent to the property owner. This has been the Borough's policy for generations. Town Council sees landlords as small business owners responsible for the management of their businesses.

With respect to our prohibition on winter disconnections, the Borough long ago had adopted a policy similar to that encouraged by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, to restrict disconnection of the utilities during the cold winter months. This is to protect the health and safety of citizens. This policy in no way prevents the landlord from evicting their tenant using common landlord tenant law. We encourage landlords to include a clause in their leases to allow them to evict their tenants for failure to pay utilities. We also encourage them to actively know their tenants' utilities account status. Finally, many landlords pay their tenants utility usage and add it to rent. We make payment plans and utility assistance available to qualified customers including LIHEAP and the Borough's Project H.E.A.T. program.

The Borough's utility collection rate has held steady at approximately 99.8% for years. This remarkable successful collection rate is due to the fact that we will not write off or allow any delinquent utilities to go unpaid without the property owner becoming responsible. We almost always collect in the end. By making the property owner responsible, the Borough ensures that the balance of the utility customers, our citizens, will not have to pick up the slack for unpaid utilities. Even in cases of foreclosure the mortgage holder pays all outstanding utilities.

We are a non-profit municipal utility owned by the citizens of the community. If we did not require the property owners to cover outstanding bills, the balance of the citizens of the town would have to pay that under collection. We cannot reasonable request that good customers cover delinquent accounts for landlords who have bad tenants.

The system works well, keeps rates some of the lowest in Pennsylvania, and protects this important community asset. These have been the policies of the Borough for generations. However, they can be changed by Town Council at any time.

For more information related to the Chambersburg Borough Electric Department, call Jeff Heverley, Electric Asst. Superintendent, at the Borough of Chambersburg, (717) 261-3236 or jheverley@chambersburgpa.gov

Chambersburg is a unique community. Pennsylvania's only municipal natural gas utility, owned and operated by the citizens of the Borough; Chambersburg is also Pennsylvania's largest municipal electric utility, and the only one that owns and operates generation stations. Chambersburg provides natural gas, electricity, water, sewer and trash for the residents and business throughout most of the Borough. Under local control, rates, policies, etc., and decided by Chambersburg Town Council. Chambersburg currently has 20,360 residents (2012). www.chambersburgpa.gov