May 1, 2020

Via Email
Steve Kelley, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Katie Sieben, Chairperson
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Re: Responsive Measures to COVID-19 Outbreak

Dear Commissioner Kelley and Chairperson Sieben:

I am writing to update you on the measures the City of Caledonia is taking to balance the financial needs of the City’s utilities with the need to assist consumers during the COVID-19 emergency. The City of Caledonia’s water, sewer, and electric services are observing the following consumer protections during the current pandemic:

1) Extending the protections of Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rules provided under Minnesota Statutes sections 216B.096 (public utilities), 216B.097 (electric cooperatives and municipal utilities) and 216B.16, subdivisions 12 and 12a (small gas utility and small electric utility, respectively) by restricting disconnection of residential customers for non-payment of utility. This request shall not affect the utility’s ability to disconnect a customer’s service for public safety concerns unrelated to non-payment of services;

2) Waiving late fees that any residential, commercial, or industrial customers incur because of the economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic;

3) Waiving credit card surcharges for payments made over the phone with City staff;

4) Arranging payment plans for customers requesting help during this time that are based on the financial resources and circumstances of the customers.

Thus far the City of Caledonia has been fortunate that there has been an increase of only a few delinquent utility accounts since the start of the pandemic. Most of the delinquent accounts are with customers whose accounts were delinquent prior to the pandemic.

In closing, the City of Caledonia is taking a balanced, reasonable approach to utility billing, collections, and disconnections. The City is accommodating customers’ needs while still
protecting the financial security of the City’s utilities and respecting the utility customers who are paying their monthly utility bills.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,

Adam Swann
City Clerk/Administrator

cc: DeWayne “Tank” Schroeder, Mayor, City of Caledonia
Bill Black, Government Relations Attorney, Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association
Steve Downer, Director of Communications and Member Relations, Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association