



**Statement on the Inspectors General Report Case #20-0040-I and
City of Baltimore Council Bill 21-0007R**

Investigative Hearing- Water Billing System
Baltimore City Council, March 25, 2021 2pm

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement in regards to Atlantic Realty Group's experience with the water billing system in Baltimore City. In brief Atlantic Realty Group owns and operates approximately 2,000 apartments and single-family home rentals in Baltimore City.

Our experiences have been challenging over the years with the Baltimore City water billing system and the Department of Public Works. Issues we experience on a regular basis are not receiving water bills for over a year. For example, account #11000256933 with a meter located at 5006 W. Forest Park Ave had a meter read date of October 12, 2019 for 460 days that covered July 9, 2018 to October 12, 2019 and a another bill was just received in January 2021 that covered 451 days of usage. It is unclear why this meter is read every 450+ days despite our efforts to report to DPW no monthly bills are being received. Furthermore, this can create an unnecessary burden on our residents that reimburse Atlantic Realty Group for their usage as the readings are not predictable.

There is a similar issue with account #11000256779 in which the last meter read date was January 16, 2019 which accounted for 359 days. In January 2021 a bill was received for \$341,590.78 covering another 360 days on this account, normally the bill would be about \$54,000 for a comparable period. Our office contacted the billing office immediately and we were assured an inspection will take place to review the meter. Six times, inspections were scheduled and no one ever arrived to review the meter. There is another inspection scheduled for March 26, 2021.

DPW owes Atlantic Realty Group \$8,295.95 on account #11000232307. The billing office claims a refund check was mailed on April 22, 2019, but was never received by our organization. There have been many calls and emails surrounding this and an open service request(#20-00299838) is still open. As of today no refund check has been received and the account is not being billed.



A leak was reported to DPW for a water meter at 401-05 Beechfield Ave, account #11000253879 on September 4, 2020. The request was made to review the charges to make adjustments due to the leak. To date no adjustments have been made and the account has a prior balance due to the lack of response from DPW. This is another account that has sporadic billing as the most recent bill from March 3, 2021 covers 208 days.

From an administrative standpoint, our organization is not able to view locations we have in Baltimore County on the portal. We have to email DPW to request a duplicate copy of the invoice which often takes weeks for a response.

In summary, the Baltimore City water billing system has been ineffective at producing monthly bills and as presented today there are several bills in our small organization that take over a year to be provided. There are open requests for meter checks and refund issues that take months and one in particular that is approaching 2 years to resolve. Today's examples are just a sample of the ongoing challenges, but do represent the recurring issues with the billing system and DPW. Our organization can continue to provide feedback and will be helpful in providing access for inspections as needed to help resolve these ongoing challenges. We welcome and are willing to assist with addressing the challenges as part of our continued partnership. Thank you.

Please contact Rick Briemann, Vice President of Atlantic Realty Group, with any questions regarding this testimony at rbriemann@liveatlantic.com