

**High Point City Council Meeting**  
**June 6, 2016**  
**Public Comment Period**

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Transcript\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Bencini: The only problem is I checked with Mr. Wagner. This is not really a public hearing. Your case isn't.

Tory Small: Okay, I'll just defer to staff then.

**Re: City of High Point Utilities Account Number 143787; Address (former): 3833 Windstream Way, Jamestown, NC, 27282**

**Josh Apel:** Council Members and Mayor, my name is Josh Apel. I'm speaking from address 3833 Windstream Way in Jamestown. This is my wife, Sarah. I work in banking and Sarah is a Nurse who worked several years at High Point Hospital. These are our children: William, Nicholas, and Mary.

We moved into Jamestown in Ward 4 in 2006 and lived there for over 10 years. We signed up for budget bill soon after starting our utilities with the City. Over the 10 years we used City Utilities we have perfect payment history. While on Budget Bill, we paid every month what the statement told us to pay in GOOD FAITH that it was satisfying what we owed.

About two weeks before the scheduled sale of our house on May 12<sup>th</sup>, I called the city to cancel our utilities when I was informed that we owe a balance of \$2,071.89 and we've been fighting it ever since. You all should be aware of the situation. I believe.

Over the last six weeks we learned that the software that was in place for Budget Bill was called Allegacy and years ago it was discovered that it contained serious errors and was not re-evaluating usage. The person in charge was Warren Larson and he was having his staff manually re-evaluate and adjust bills until he left his position. His successor totally abandoned that process. Our account apparently hasn't been re-evaluated in years and may have never been re-evaluated after the software problems were discovered.

The fact is if our account had been re-evaluated, which was the City's responsibility to do, and we put our FAITH and TRUST in the City to do it, we would have paid for any increased usage years ago and we would owe ZERO today. Yes, we acknowledge that we consumed the energy, but we are faced with this balance because of the City's error, not ours. Further, we were also on equal payment plans with USA Insurance and Piedmont Natural Gas. On their respective statements, you can see an account balance that is sometimes larger than the amount being billed under the equal payment plan, however, we pay what the statement tells us to and at the end of that period our account is satisfied.

Therefore, it could easily be assumed that with us paying \$215 per month, which is what we were paying to the City of High Point Utilities, that over 12 month period we would end up

paying \$2,580., which is more than the balance shown on the statements, and so it would actually appear to us that we would have an overpayment situation. There was NOTHING on the City bills that indicated that the large balance was a past due or underpaid balance.

We're not asking you to set a new precedent for everyone that was affected by this. The others that have been affected can fight their own battles if they choose to. We're here fighting for our family.

You members of the council, who represent the PEOPLE in the City of High Point who voted you into your positions, have the ability to make this right for our family. And the right thing to do is to waive this balance due to an error on the part of the City. We are the victims; Please put yourselves in our shoes.

We respectfully request a vote to take place to consider waiving this balance and we pray that you will find it in your hearts and consciences to vote in our favor so that our family can move on to our new home without this dark cloud hanging over us. Thank you.

**Rev. Frank Thomas:** Good evening Mr. Mayor and Members of Council. My name is Reverend Frank Thomas. I reside at 693 Mallard Landing Boulevard in Clemmons. I pastor Mt. Zion Baptist Church, here in the city at 753 Washington Street. I stand before you tonight to share an announcement and invite you to a service that the ministers in the faith community here in High Point are holding this coming Sunday at 6:00 p.m. In the wake of the shooting at Mother Immanuel Church last year, Rev. Kinston Jones of St. Stephen's AME Zion Church held a Unity in the Community service where members of the community just came together to worship and pray for that community. The ministers decided to keep that service going and we have since held three other services. The last of which was in March where we collected over 100 cases of water and sent over \$1,000 to Flint, Michigan to help with the water crisis. So this Sunday is another service that we will just come together as a faith community. Citywide, we will gather at the Christ United Methodist Church on University this Sunday at 6:00 p.m. We invite you to attend and spread the word. Thank you.

Mayor Bencini: Thank you, Rev. Thomas.

That completes the list of individuals that signed up, but anybody else can come forward if they'd like to speak. Seeing no one, I'll close.....

**Jason Yates:** Jason Yates. I'm with the Human Relations Commission and on behalf of the Commission I just wanted to extend an invitation to you all to come out to the Ramadan Community Dinner that we are going to be co-sponsoring. It's going to be on June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Macedonia Resource Center on Lake Drive in High Point.

Mayor Bencini: Thank you, Jason. Thank you very much.

Council Member C. Davis: Jason, what time was that?

Jason Yates: It's 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Council Member C. Davis: Thank you.

Mayor Bencini: Anyone else care to speak tonight? Seeing no one, we're going to close the public comment period and go to our regular agenda items. First up is the Finance Committee, Council Member Jim Davis.

[end of transcript for Public Comment Period]