CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS

COMMUNICATION DIVISION

DATE: February 23, 2005

TO: Radio Read Meter Committee

FROM: V. Foisy

SUBJ: Proposal review and comments

I have reviewed the proposals that I was furnished **only on the technology/communication needs and methods**. *(I do not feel I should comment on or address the other areas and needs in the proposals.)* I am interested to hear the presentations and concepts of operation as they all appear to be working on the same basic principals of communicating, however there were some gray areas that hopefully can be cleared up at the presentation.

Overall the concepts are good <u>today</u>, but **looking ahead** to the future of **being able to pull the meter data from the desktop** as needed and run automatically preset reports would be more advantageous I would think. (The clerk within the office could perform final meter reads, read verifications, etc.)

Upon researching this issue and talking with product vendors working on this new ability, the technology is near, in progress, and will be available soon. **(I have been told that the larger utilities like DTE and Consumers Energy need to upgrade their methods as well, but are awaiting the wide-area ability!)**

It would be nice if the proposed product could be easily upgradeable without physical visits to the sites, but I do not feel this will be so. I also noticed while reviewing the proposal from Consumers Energy where they could obtain our reads while doing theirs. In my opinion this would be a great program to go with now and we could let the technology advance for a few years and still save some money it would appear!

Since I am not aware of the actual costs we currently incur today to obtain the meter reads, I suggest that you strongly look at the offer by Consumers Power to cover a few more years of manual reads and wait for the new technology. It is strongly possible we could soon see a multi-user reporting device that could be installed on the premise/meter(s) and be used by all utilities to obtain readings remotely from a desktop at a shared cost.

A positive result of a physical visit to read the meter is that the person can see any tampering or alteration of the meters which a remote reporting system (either local or wide-area) may not be able to detect! I agree driving the circuit to obtain meter readings would be quicker than walking, but a few keystrokes and a couple clicks on the mouse would be even better! **I would suggest further reviewing the Consumers proposal, but not make any hardware changes at this time** and see what technical changes bring us in the near future.

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cc: Project File
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