



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
PUBLIC
UTILITIES

2155 BEERY ROAD, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 434-9959 • FAX (540) 434-9769

TO: Eric Campbell, City Manager
FROM: Mike Collins, Director, Public Utilities
DATE: September 28, 2021
RE: Utility Disconnection Review

Summary: The Director of Public Utilities is requesting approval to resume utility disconnects November 1, 2021, allowing payment arrangement for utility arrears over a 9-month period.

Background: The City of Harrisonburg suspended utility disconnects following the moratorium Governor Northam placed in effect March 2020. In March 2020, 1,600 utility accounts were in arrears \$145,417.77. As of March 2021 there were 1,632 utility accounts in arrears totaling \$677,405.90 and increase in dollar amount of 365.8%

Key Issues: Utility Relief Funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Housing and Community Development was received in the amount of \$92,766.47. The funding has been dispersed over 209 qualifying applicants after significant outreach by Public Utilities and the Harrisonburg Fire Department in collaboration with HEC. Payment arrangements were offered after enacting an addendum to Title 7, Chapter 1, Section 9. One hundred sixty-four (164) accounts entered into payment arrangements whereas fifty-two (52) complied and one hundred twelve (112) failed to comply. Ordinance Title 15, Chapter 7, Section 5, to relieve customers from penalties associated with late payment of bills for city utility service during the declared state of emergency was enacted February 23, 2021. To date \$7,998.88 has been refunded in pandemic related late penalties.

Environmental Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Prior Actions:

- 1) Phone calls attempted to all customer greater than 60 days past due
- 2) Applications collected for utility relief funds
- 3) Social Media notification



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- 4) Messages on utility bills
- 5) Public Service Announcements

- Alternatives:**
- (a) Continue suspension of utility disconnects
 - (b) Extend the date to resume utility disconnects

Community Engagement: N/A

Recommendation: Resume utility disconnect starting November 1, 2021

Attachments: 1) PowerPoint Presentation

Review:

The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial