


CITY COUNCIL REPORT FROM STAFF

TO: Mayor and City Council
cc: Department Directors
FROM: Jerald A. Postema, Utility Director 
VIA: Mayor Jessop, Mayor/City Administrator
DATE: October 15, 2025
RE: Updates to Utility Customer Payment Portal

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

In an effort to reduce costs and increase customer service, the Utility Billing Department researched ways to use current utility billing software for accepting payments and communicating with customers. In making the change, we found some unintended consequences which has made it challenging for customers enrolling in the new payment system. We are taking steps to fix the issues and get enrollment completed for everyone.

All transaction fees are now being transferred to the city utility department for payment and removed from the customer accounts. Any customer who has been charged a merchant transaction fee will receive a credit from the payment company to their card or account on file at the time of the transaction.

DISCUSSION:

To better assist our customers in making the transition from the old utility payment portal to the new system, the Utility Billing Department will be going through the customers who are not connected to the current system and help them with changing their automatic payment. To complete this process, staff will reach out to the customers and assist them in making the changes. While this process is being completed, any payments that are past due because they did not make the change, will have the past months delinquent fees removed.

OPTIONS: (if applicable)

The customers will receive both a text message and a phone call to help make the transition. Staff will divide up the customers, about 400 currently on the delinquent list, to call and make sure we walk them through the process of setting up the new automatic payment process.

NEXT STEPS: (if applicable)

Staff will begin tomorrow, October 16, 2025, to contact customers and help them make the transition to the new auto pay system. The Billing Clerk will remove the delinquent fees from the accounts and the text message will be sent to the customers who are not in the new payment system.

SUMMARY:

By removing the merchant transaction fee from the customer account and transferring it to the utility budget, there will be a reduction on the customer bills. By personally assisting the customers we will ensure the proper information is placed in the proper portal, it also allows for customers to receive direct clarification to their questions.