

TO: Mayor Buesinger and City Council

FROM: Secretary Stephens

DATE: April 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Resident Request for Refund of Secondary Water Meter Charges

Summary

A resident has requested that the City consider refunding the monthly base (maintenance) charges associated with a secondary water meter installed during the home's construction in 2016. The secondary meter has reflected zero usage since installation.

Background

The builder requested and paid for two meters at the time of construction. Upon transferring the accounts, the new homeowners placed deposits on each meter. It appears, however, that during construction all irrigation and pool lines were tied to the primary meter, leaving the secondary meter unused.

The resident has paid only the flat-rate maintenance fee on the secondary meter. No sewer or garbage charges were applied, and because the City does not calculate sewer based on water usage, there was no overbilling on the primary meter.

Maintenance charges apply to all active meters regardless of consumption. These fees cover the cost of maintaining the account, meter infrastructure, and system capacity. Based on staff research, there is no state or federal requirement for the City or its operator to notify customers of consecutive zero-usage reads, and no statutory obligation to refund base charges when a meter is unused.

The resident asked how he could obtain a refund. Staff explained that refunds cannot be issued without an established policy and that the request would need to be brought to Council for direction. In the meantime, billing on the secondary account has been placed on hold, and the meter has been locked and scheduled for removal.

Staff Recommendation

If Council wishes to consider a compromise, staff recommends the following:

- Refund the \$500 deposit by check, consistent with standard procedure when an account is closed.
- Provide a one-time courtesy credit equal to last fiscal year's maintenance charges (\$160) to the resident's primary utility account.

Staff requests Council direction on how to proceed.