

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TEMPORARY AMENDMENT TO THE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS PROVISIONS OF THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR UTILITY BILLING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND TO AUTHORIZE THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT TO RELEASE UTILITY INFORMATION WHEN AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY A CUSTOMER

WHEREAS, On February 7, 2006, the board approved the Finance Department Policies and Procedures for Utility Billing and Customer Services; and

WHEREAS, this policy allows for payment arrangements in the event a customer is unable to pay his or her water bill though the period for the payment arrangement is limited to six months; and

WHEREAS, the board finds it appropriate and in the best interest of the city and its citizens to temporarily amend the policy to allow payment arrangements for a period of up to twelve months in order to provide relief for those with delinquencies; and

WHEREAS, this amendment shall apply to those requesting a payment arrangement before January 1, 2024, at which time the policy shall revert to a maximum 6-month payment arrangement; and

WHEREAS, the board finds it appropriate and in the best interest of the city and its citizens for payment due dates and water cut offs to be delayed for any customer who has requested a payment arrangement before January 1, 2024 which is then subsequently approved; and

WHEREAS, to further assist customers with delinquencies the board passed Resolution No. 2022-263 which approved a vendor agreement for participation in the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) administered by Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the agreement city is responsible for providing relevant billing and usage information to customers which would be used to determine eligibility for participation in the program; and

WHEREAS, while utility information is made confidential by state law, Tennessee Code Annotated § 10-7-504(a)(20)(E) does allow for the release of this information when authorized by the consumer; and

WHEREAS, the board finds it to be a benefit to both the city and its citizens to release directly to Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency utility information necessary to verify a customer's eligibility for participation in LIHWAP upon the receipt of authorization for the release from the customer.

Now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. That the Finance Department Policies and Procedures for Utility Billing and Customer Services is temporarily amended to authorize up to a twelve-month payment arrangement for delinquent customers who request a payment arrangement before January 1, 2024 after which the policy shall revert to a maximum 6 month payment arrangement.

SECITON II. That the Finance Department Policies and Procedures for Utility Billing and Customer Services is temporarily amended to authorize payment due dates and water cut offs to be delayed for any customer who has requested a payment arrangement before January 1, 2024 which is then subsequently approved. The policy shall return to the requirements in effect as of February 7, 2006 for all requests for payment arrangements received on or after January 1, 2024.

SECTION III. That the finance department is authorized to release necessary utility information directly to Upper East Tennessee Development Agency upon receipt of authorization to release necessary utility information from the customer when same is needed to verify eligibility in LIHWAP.

SECTION IV. That the board finds that the actions authorized by this resolution are for a public purpose and will promote the health, comfort, and prosperity of the citizens of the city.

SECTION V. That this resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the public welfare requiring it.

ADOPTED this the 7th day of February, 2023.

PATRICK W. SHULL, MAYOR

ATTEST:

ANGELA MARSHALL, DEPUTY CITY RECORDER

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

RODNEY B. ROWLETT, III, CITY ATTORNEY