

EXECUTIVE BRIEF REGULAR MEETING

AGENDA DATE: September 15, 2020

DEPARTMENT: Electric Utility

TITLE:

Policy Direction regarding the resumption of City utility disconnects for non-payment and amendment to Resolution 21-2020 to remove the reference to July 16, 2020 and insert “to the end of the City moratorium on utility disconnects currently in place”

SUMMARY:

Staff is seeking Policy Direction by the City Commission regarding rescinding the moratorium on City utility service shutoffs for non-payment.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

City has been operating under a moratorium regarding City utility disconnects for non-payment effective March 17, 2020. Since that date Staff has been instructed to not shut off City utility service for non-payment.

At the June 30, 2020 electric utility meeting, the City Commission voted to approve resolution number 21-2020, a resolution that established a payment plan for utility customers with accounts subject to service disconnection during the period of March 16, 2020 to July 16, 2020 for non-payment. The resolution established a payment plan of 12 months for residential accounts and 24 months for commercial accounts that have become delinquent. At the same meeting the City Commission also approved the resumption of utility disconnects for non-payment beginning July 17, 2020.

At the July 21, 2020 meeting City’s Electric Utility Director informed the City Commission that utility disconnects planned to begin effective July 17, 2020 were deferred to make additional efforts to contact affected customers via phone and with door hangers to encourage them to elect to go on payment plans and avoid a service shutoff. The City Commission was supportive that such additional compassionate steps were being taken and requested that the Director bring the matter forward once again at a future meeting prior to resuming shutoffs. The City Commission again discussed the matter at the August 25th Electric Utility meeting and voted to extend the moratorium and bring the matter forward again at the September 15th, 2020 meeting.

All affected customers as of the July 17th, 2020 shutoff date have been contacted via phone and/or door hangers. In addition, Staff has continued with a proactive outreach program to contact affected customers to make them aware that shutoffs are imminent, make them aware once again of sources of assistance, and offering them the opportunity to enroll in a payment plan. As of September 9, 2020, City has 1,953 customers subject to shutoff with amounts in arrears of \$1.2 million, over 2,900 calls have been made since the July 17th original shutoff date, and over 892 customers have signed up for payment plans.

Also, Resolution 21-2020 set forth the payment plan for non-payment of utilities due to COVID. The payment plan opportunity was for customers with an “account subject to service disconnection for non-payment from March 16, 2020 to July 16, 2020.” Since the moratorium on disconnects has been extended since July 16, 2020, Resolution 21-2020 should be amended to delete “July 16, 2020” and insert “to the end of the City moratorium on utility disconnects currently in place”.

MOTION:

Move to approve/disapprove the resumption of City utility shutoffs for non-payment effective _____ and amend Resolution 21-2020 to remove the reference to July 16, 2020 and insert “to the end of the City moratorium on utility disconnects currently in place”.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Fiscal Impact Analysis- NA