

Water Bill Appeal
5309 Cilantro Place

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Public Works Director
City Council Meeting
May 6, 2025

Summary

- Question
 - City Council is being asked to consider granting an appeal to reduce a water bill surcharge & authorize payment plan for a water and sewer customer
- Options
 - Recommended:
 1. No change.
 2. Remove surcharge and allow a payment plan
 - Denial
 - Other
- Declaration
 - The high water bill was not intentional & some relief is appropriate for this customer
 - Council to decide final outcome

Purpose

- Consider an appeal by a Leon Valley water customer to reduce the amount of a water surcharge and/or allow a payment plan for the remaining water bill for the Feb/March 2025 billing cycle

Purpose / Background

- In August of 2024, the City Council enacted drought management water surcharge for Stage III drought management regulations which states in part:
- “(vi) A drought surcharge is assessed on all accounts for water used or assumed to be used for landscape irrigation
- Surcharge is to remain in effect for a minimum of one complete billing month and will remain in effect if Stage III is still in effect at the beginning of the next billing month”
- The surcharge is \$10.37 per 1,000 gallons for water usage of over 20,000 gallons

Purpose / Background

- The drought surcharge policy states in part:
- “8. Appeals. The responsible party may appeal the decision to apply a drought surcharge to the account
- All appeals must be requested in writing by the customer within ten days of receipt of notice of the drought surcharge being applied to the account
- Appeals received will be routed to the Public Works Director for review and recommendation
- Once a recommendation has been made, the appeal will be forwarded to the City Council for a final decision”

Purpose / Background

- Customer appeals, stating children were at home for spring break & while playing outside, turned on backyard water spigot & forgot about it
- Water ran for a long period of time, which flooded both her neighbor's and her backyards
 - Staff received the calls & notified her of possible leak
- She is requesting the surcharge be waived and/or possibly get assistance on paying the bill or approving payment arrangements to pay off the balance

Fiscal Impact

- Customer average usage 8,400 gal per mo.
- Average monthly bill \$105.00
- Feb/Mar 2025 consumption 146,000 gal
- Total bill \$2,880.13
 - Includes surcharge \$1306.62

Recommendation

- Waive surcharge fee -~~\$~~1306.62
 - Total bill \$2,880.13
 - Surcharge ~~\$~~1,306.62
 - Remaining charge \$1,573.51
 - 12-month plan \$ 131.13
 - They would be required to pay the normal monthly bill (est. \$105) on time, in addition to the restitution, which would result in an average of \$234 per month