
CITY OF PORT LAVACA

CITY COUNCIL MEETING: MARCH 8, 2021

AGENDA ITEM _____

DATE: 3.3.2021

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: JODY WEAVER, INTERIM CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: ADJUSTMENT OF WATER BILLS DUE TO LEAKS/ EXCESSIVE USE DURING THE FREEZING WEATHER

GBRA pumped 6.1 Million gallons of water more to Port Lavaca in February than in the first 28 days of February last year. Looking at the pumping charts, nearly all of this additional water can be attributed to the period of the freeze from Feb 15 thru Feb 21. We do not yet have the bill for February from GBRA, but we're estimating it will be \$10,000-\$15,000 more than what we would expect for a normal February.

I am proposing to establish a temporary financial policy whereby we will adjust any utility bill (residential or commercial) that results in a greater than Base Rate Bill due to excessive water use during the period from February 15 to February 21.

The proposed action plan is as follows:

- Utility Billing will run an Abnormal Consumption Report (ACR) which will identify any water use above a customer's normal usage.
- For each account identified in the ACR, Karen will look at their consumption during the period from Feb 15-Feb 21. Any identified excessive use during these days will not be included in the gallons billed.

This policy should result in no customer being billed for excessive water use caused by this extraordinary winter freeze disaster event. Beyond this proactive effort on the City's part, customer complaints about high or incorrect water bills will be handled as usual.

We recognize that the excessive water use resulting from this disaster event was not something generally in anyone's full control and therefore we do not wish to add any more financial burden to our water customers. It is also recognized however, that adjusting these accounts will result in a loss of revenue to the Public Utility Fund, that would have been used to cover the cost to the City for this additional water. In order that the Public Utility Fund is not negatively impacted by these actions, we are proposing to replace the lost revenue in the PUF by using funds from the available \$683,815 that the City received from the CARES ACT as reimbursement for eligible expenses. These reimbursement dollars may now be used in any way as approved by Council.

I am asking Council approval of this financial policy.

In addition, I am asking Council to waive all permit fees for residential repairs needed due to damage caused by this winter freeze disaster. As stated previously, minor repairs to residential water and sewer lines need only register their repair with the Permits Department, but this permit fee waiver would be in the event that a resident incurred damage to their home that required more extensive repairs.