

RESOLUTION NO. 026-20

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PORT ORCHARD, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING A UTILITY PAYMENT PLAN POLICY.

WHEREAS; the financial and public health impact from the COVID-19 pandemic has been sudden and unprecedented; and

WHEREAS; the Washington State Governor has issued Proclamation 20.23.4, directing utility providers to develop a COVID-19 customer support program including alternative payment arrangements; and

WHEREAS; the City Council has previously approved Ordinance 009-20, delegating authority to the finance director to waive utility late fees, penalties and/or disconnections charges as well as make alternative utility payment arrange payments under certain conditions: and

WHEREAS, the Finance Department has developed an alternative Payment Plan Policy consistent with the Ordinance 009-20 and the Governor's Proclamation; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PORT ORCHARD, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

THAT: The City Council approves the Utility Payment Policy as attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference. The Council further authorizes the Mayor to make adjustments to the policy as needed and report back any modifications to council within sixty (60) days of said modification.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Port Orchard, SIGNED by the Mayor and attested by the City Clerk in authentication of such passage this 23rd day of June 2020.



Robert Putaansuu, Mayor

ATTEST:



Brandy Rinearson, MMC, City Clerk





Policy & Procedure

Subject: Utility Billing Payment Plan Options		
Beginning Date:	Page 1 of 2	
Approved by:	Effective Date:	Supersedes:

1.0 PURPOSE:

The Finance Department has put in place the below policy framework to assist customers experiencing economic hardship and requesting payment arrangements. These are the steps we are recommending putting into place for our utility system. This payment plan arrangement is in support of the governor's order relating to COVID-19 and our existing Port Orchard Municipal Code.

2.0 POLICY:

The city will provide payment options for those financially struggling through a pandemic event, declared emergencies, or extenuating circumstances (defined herein) while providing ongoing utility services to customers. It is imperative to protect the financial sustainability of the City's system, to avoid providing defaulting customers with a prohibited gift of public funds, and to avoid passing on the defaults to current rate payers.

3.0 PROCEDURES:

- Staff shall develop a payment plan option, including an application form, for customers with past due balances where the past due balance is attributable to a declared emergency, such as a pandemic, or other extenuating circumstances impacting the ratepayer's ability to pay, including but not limited to a documented financial hardship.
- The payment plan shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - Bimonthly charges will continue.

- Taking past due amount and dividing by maximum of 6 months to be paid in combination with current amount due.
- Payment plan to go no longer than 6 months unless exception granted by the Finance Director.
- During the payment plan there will be no penalties or shutoffs incurred for those customers on an approved payment plan.
- Default on payments will make the plan void and return to current penalty and shutoff guidelines.