

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

TO: BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
FROM: ALAN ALTON, ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, FINANCE
DEPARTMENT
KIMBERLY ZUNINO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
ADMINISTRATION, SANTA ROSA WATER
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO MODIFY CITY
CODE TITLE 14 (POTABLE WATER AND RECYCLED WATER),
BY MODIFYING SUBSECTION (B) AND DELETING
SUBSECTION (G) OF SECTION 14-04.010 (DEFINITIONS) AND
MODIFYING SECTION 14-04.140 (BILLS- GENERALLY)

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Finance Department and Santa Rosa Water that the Board of Public Utilities, by resolution, recommend that the City Council introduce an ordinance modifying Title 14 (Potable and Recycled Water) of the City Code to modify the definition of "Billing Period" in Section 14-04.010(B), delete the definition of "Monthly" in Section 14-04.010(G) and modify Section 14-04.140 to delete the wording "12 times per year" and replace it with a requirement that the City render bills "monthly".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the implementation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), Water Billing is able to create more consistent billing periods for water and sewer customers. Billing periods are currently between 28 to 35 days. In order to modify the meter read schedules to transition from billing periods of 28 to 35 days to billing periods of 28 to 32 days, the City will have to issue a 13th bill to some customers in 2021. City Code Section 14-04.140 currently states that the City shall render bills 12 times per calendar year, and the City Code sections must be modified to accomplish the modification to the City billing. Affected customers will still have a full billing period of no less than 28 days, but they will receive a bill in the last week of 2021, creating 13 bills for the calendar year for these customers.

BACKGROUND

Santa Rosa Water (SRW) customers are billed for water and/or sewer by the Water Billing Division of the Finance Department. All customers connected to the public water

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system are billed based on actual usage measured through a water meter. Until the Advanced Metering Infrastructure System (AMI) was installed, more than 35,000 meters were read manually by a Meter Reader requiring a complex meter reading schedule that accommodated weekends and holidays. To read the meters and process accurate bills, the City is separated into 8 billing cycles based on location of the meter, and each billing cycle currently has a billing period ranging from a 28 to 35 days. The proposed modification to the City Code will allow Water Billing to adjust the billing periods starting in 2022 so that all 8 cycles bill in the same calendar month each year and have a more consistent number of days in the billing period.

ANALYSIS

1. Water Billing produces bills for all 53,000 plus water and/or sewer customers in 8 separate cycles.
2. A billing period is a meter reading at the beginning and the end of a period of time for which the customer is billed for usage and currently consists of 28-35 days in length.
3. There are 8 cycles which were developed to accommodate a practice where Meter Readers manually read meters during normal business hours, excluding weekends and holidays, and the purpose was to schedule when staff would manually read meters and allow time to review calculated bills to assure accuracy.
4. In 2021, installation of the AMI system was completed allowing meters to be read without staff going to the physical meter locations to collect a meter read for billing.
5. Water Billing still requires time to review any exceptions or issues with calculated bills and therefore will continue to bill in 8 separate cycles, but staff are able to create a schedule that will allow for more consistent timeframes for the billing period.
6. To modify the meter reading schedule so each cycle will be billed one time during each calendar month and with more consistent billing periods, billing cycles 7 and 8 will receive a bill at the beginning and the end of December 2021. Both cycle's bills will be based on actual use and within the billing period parameters of 28 to 35 days. This will not adversely affect the customers in those billing cycles, but it will result in 13 bills rendered in 2021, instead of 12 as required by City Code Sections 14.04.010 (G), which defines "monthly" and Section 14-04.140 Bills-Generally, which requires the City to render bills 12 times per year.
7. To accommodate this change in billing period, City Code Section 14-04.010(B) defining "Billing period" will be modified and Section 14-04.010(G) defining "Monthly" to mean occurring 12 times per calendar year, will be deleted.
8. City Code Section 14-04.140 states: "The City shall render bills 12 times per calendar year. Opening bills covering new applicants for less than one billing period's service may, in the discretion of the City, be included in the next regular

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billing. Closing bills for short periods of time since the last meter reading day may be determined by meter reading or by prorating the amount of the last regular bill based upon the number of days for which service was rendered.” The first sentence in this section will be modified to state “The City shall render bills monthly.” This will eliminate the more rigid requirement that bills be rendered 12 times per calendar year.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for the proposed change.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not an action which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution

CONTACT

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