

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2020

EXPRESSING the support of the Mayor and Cincinnati City Council for the City Administration to proceed without delay to establish a program to provide financial relief to qualified low-income residential customers experiencing COVID-19-related economic hardship by forgiving delinquent water service and City of Cincinnati stormwater charges accumulated during the COVID-19 crisis between March 1 to September 30, 2020.

WHEREAS, water service plays a critical role in promoting handwashing, cleaning of surfaces, improved hygiene, and disease prevention, which is especially important for slowing the spread of COVID-19 during the current pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the City, through its Greater Cincinnati Water Works (“GCWW”), provides retail water service to approximately 213,000 residential accounts, estimated at around 1.1 million people in Southwest Ohio, including most of the population of Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of residential utility customers are experiencing loss of income and unemployment due to health measures ordered to slow the spread of COVID-19, including Governor Mike DeWine’s March 9, 2020 emergency declaration, the Ohio Department of Health’s March 22, 2020 stay-at-home order, and other public health considerations during the pandemic that directly affect personal circumstances and commerce; and

WHEREAS, due to COVID-19 pandemic-related economic hardship, many residential utility customers have accumulated delinquent utility charges that would ordinarily place them at risk for water service shutoff; and

WHEREAS, almost 40,000 residential utility accounts have accrued delinquencies from March 1 to September 30, 2020 alone; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has led to a sharp increase in past-due utility bills in comparison to last year, including an increase in delinquencies for water and stormwater service from \$4.8 million (2019) to \$8.1 million (2020) and, for sanitary sewer, from \$5.3 million (2019) to \$9.1 million (2020); and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council have recognized the critical need to assist low-income residential customers experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardships to maintain water service during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the City Administration is formulating a program to forgive past-due water service and City of Cincinnati stormwater portions of the utility bills accrued from the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 to the end of September 2020, in order to provide eligible low-

income customers time to bring their past due sanitary sewer and other charges current and prevent water service shutoff; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Mayor and City Council express support for the City Administration's intention to forgive past-due water service and City stormwater portions of the utility bills accrued between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020 for low-income customers, including property owners and tenants responsible for utility payments under the lease, who have experienced COVID-19 related economic hardship and who qualify under criteria established by the City Manager.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council.

Passed: _____, 2020

John Cranley, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk