



# CITY OF DAHLONEGA

## SPECIAL CALLED MEETING AGENDA

APRIL 20, 2020 AT 4:00 PM

This meeting will be viewable to the public at:

[Zoom Meeting Platform](#)

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133

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### TELECONFERENCE INFORMATION

Due to recommendations by the CDC during the Coronavirus crisis, this meeting will be conducted via teleconference. This is allowed by O.C.G.A. §50-14-1(g) as the public is provided simultaneous access to the teleconference meeting. The City of Dahlonega will utilize Zoom to conduct this teleconference meeting.

#### TO JOIN:

Go to - <https://dahlonega.gov/category/news/>

Find the meeting invite you would like to attend

OR – Click on the hyperlink above

**We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time**

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#### CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

#### NEW BUSINESS

1. Utility Billing Late Fees and Disconnection of Services

Melody Marlowe, Finance Director

#### ADJOURNMENT



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**DATE:** April 20, 2020  
**TITLE:** Utility Billing Late Fees and Disconnection of Services  
**PRESENTED BY:** Melody Marlowe, Finance Director

### AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION:

Calls and emails have increased from customers requesting extension of due dates for paying utility bills because of inability to pay related to the Coronavirus Pandemic. City Council is asked to review requirements of the Water and Sewer Rates Ordinance and determine if action is warranted to temporarily suspend late fees and disconnection of service.

### HISTORY/PAST ACTION:

Below is an excerpt from the City’s Water and Sewer Rates Ordinance that covers penalties and fees charged for late payments.

*A penalty of 10% or a minimum amount of \$2.00 will be added each month to any delinquent utility bill that has not been paid by the tenth of each month....Any utility bill delinquent on the 20th of the month will result in service being discontinued, and a service charge of \$75.00 will be added to the bill.*

Since Council’s adoption of the emergency declaration in March, there have been no service disconnections or penalty charges for non-payment of utility bills.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT:

On average, the City charges \$7,800 in utility penalties and fees each month. The 10% penalty charged on the 10th of the month averages \$3,800; the \$75 fee charged on the 20th of the month averages \$4,000. The approval of a grace period will lead to collection challenges: payment arrangements will negatively impact cash flow, and some accounts may become uncollectible.

### RECOMMENDATION:

As a relief to customers, Council may desire to temporarily suspend the requirements to charge penalties and disconnect services for non-payment. For administrative facilitation, this grace period would apply to all customer types, i.e. residential, commercial, etc. This temporary grace period would allow financially-challenged customers time to secure payment through other resources and avoid additional charges without the fear that water service would be disconnected.

### SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

I make a motion for the City to temporarily suspend charging late fees or disconnecting service because of inability to pay utility bills for two months, April and May 2020. The City Finance Director is authorized to make payment arrangements with individual customers to resolve unpaid balances after May 31, 2020.

### ATTACHMENTS:

None