



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING**

#21-0614

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: July 6, 2021

TITLE: First Reading - Ordinance Amending Division 3. – Rate and Charges of Chapter 28 - Water, Wastewater and Stormwater, Sections 28-76(b)(2), 28-76(b)(3), 28-76(b)(4), 28-143(b)(2), 28-144(b) and Deleting Sections 28-173 and 28-174, Providing for a Simplified Administration of Water and Wastewater Credits for Leaks and Unexplained Usage, Repeal of Conflicting Ordinance Provisions, and Providing for an Effective Date - **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission consider the attached ordinance amending Division 3. – Rate and Charges of Chapter 28 - Water, Wastewater and Stormwater, Sections 28-76(b)(2), 28-76(b)(3), 28-76(b)(4), 28-143(b)(2), 28-144(b) and deleting Sections 28-173 and 28-174, providing for a simplified administration of water and wastewater credits for leaks and unexplained usage, repeal of conflicting ordinance provisions, and providing for an effective date.

Background

There are currently 12 sections in the Code of Ordinances dealing with the provision of water and wastewater credits in the event of a leak or unexplained usage. The structure and process for requesting credits and the calculation of the credit amount is complex for staff and can be difficult to explain to impacted neighbors.

Staff surveyed neighboring communities in Broward to identify best practices for Utility Billing credits. As a result of this research and information gathered from stakeholders (Utility Billing staff, Bond Council, City Attorney's Office, neighbors), staff is recommending the following changes to the credit provisions of the water and waste water provisions in the Code of Ordinances:

Reduce the number of applicable sections from twelve to seven and provide consistency between the sections.

The seven sections are as follows:

- Wastewater
 1. Unexplained Usage
 2. Leak
 3. Pool Filling Credit (no change proposed)
- Water
 4. Unexplained Usage
 5. Leak
- Irrigation
 6. Unexplained Usage
 7. Leak

Unexplained Usage credits would be available after completion of an application within 60 days of the bill in question. In addition, a meter test and plumber certification that no leak exists is required. This credit (up to two months) is limited to one time during the life of an account.

Leak credits would be available after completion of an application within 60 days of the bill in question. In addition, a plumber certification of leak repair is required. Monthly usage must exceed two times the average for the past year to be eligible for the credit.

The current ordinance provides credit based on the neighbor's average rate tier in the system. The proposed ordinance will provide the credit at the lowest tiered rate, allowing for more meaningful credits. For example, the current rate structure for wastewater has two tiers: 0-3,000 gallons and over 3,000 gallons. A neighbor with average usage at or above 3,000 gallons per month would not receive any credit for wastewater in the event of unexplained usage or a leak.

Note that currently there is no application form. One will be created and posted on the City's web site and available at the Utility Billing office.

Resource Impact

Under the current structure, water and wastewater credits of approximately \$20,000 are provided each month. It is expected that this ordinance would increase that amount, but additional cost would be dependent on credit claims submitted. It is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund.

Strategic Connections

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024 Strategic Plan*, specifically advancing:

- The Internal Support Focus Area
- Goal 8: Build a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably
- Objective: Maintain financial integrity through sound budgeting practices, prudent fiscal management, cost effective operations, and long-term planning

This item advances the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are United.

Attachment

Exhibit 1 – Ordinance

Prepared by: Susan Grant, Director, Finance
Claudelle Rose, Sr. Admin Assistant, Finance

Department Director: Susan Grant, Finance