

## Utility Policies – Adopted by City Council - September 14, 2010

### 1. Purpose

- a. This policy has been developed to provide a method for the City of Monticello to respond to our utility customers in a consistent and fair manner. It was approved by City Council on September 14, 2010. (Latest update March 14, 2023).

### 2. General Policies

- a. All utility meters are the property of the City and it is the responsibility of all customers to provide safe and adequate access to meters for our utility personnel.

### 3. New Service

- a. Customers applying for service will be asked to furnish required information and sign a signature card. When a request for service is made residential customers must present two forms of identification: 1) must be a valid picture identification (state issued driver's license, passport, state issued ID card) and 2) a social security card. We also need proof of residency which may include any of the following: executed rental receipts in your name with the property address and landlord name, proof of home ownership in the form of a closing statement, sales contract or insurance declarations page if buying in your name. Warranty deeds cannot be accepted as they do not list the actual property address.
- b. Business customers must present proof of tenancy as stated above and a valid city business license.
- c. Credit card applicants may establish or re-establish service from a remote location by fax. We will fax a copy of the signature card to the prospective customer. The customer must fill it out, sign and return the fax with two forms of identification attached. Service will be established and an original signature card mailed to the customer to sign, notarize, and return within the first billing cycle. Failure to return the original signature card will result in service disconnect until the signature card is received. A reconnection fee of \$55 must be paid before service will be restored.
- d. The customer must make sure someone is present at the new residence before we can connect any utilities. We will accept a letter from you designating a representative that can act on your behalf and be present at the residence for services to be connected.

Amended March 14, 2023

4. Transfer of Service – We follow these procedures when a customer transfers from one residence to another but remains a utility customer of the City of Monticello.
  - a. The customer will pay the current balance for the old residence in full before that account can be closed.
  - b. A new deposit will be determined based upon the number and type of services at the new address and the customer’s payment history at the old address. We will transfer the deposit from the old address to the new address. The customer will be refunded the difference if the new deposit is less and will pay the difference if the new deposit is more.
  - c. The old account will be terminated and a final meter reading will be performed. The customer will be billed for any remaining balance on the old account after a final meter reading. This amount will be added to the balance at the new account.

5. Deposits

- a. We set the amount of your utility deposit based on credit scores received from Online Utility Exchange. The amount of the residential utility deposit will be set based on the results below.

<b>Residential Deposit Chart for All Services</b>						
<b>Credit Score</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>Water – Sewer</b>	<b>Total Electric</b>	<b>All Services</b>
685 and up	Green	\$100	\$100	\$50	\$200	\$250
630 – 684	Yellow	\$120	\$120	\$60	\$225	\$300
0 – 629	Red	\$200	\$200	\$75	\$300	\$475

<b>Residential Deposit Chart for Total Electric</b>				
<b>Credit Score</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Total</b>
685 and up	Green	\$150	\$50	\$200
630-684	Yellow	\$175	\$50	\$225
0-629	Red	\$225	\$75	\$300

- b. In the case of a customer transferring from one location in the city to another location in the city and the customer has an excellent payment history (no late payments or contracts in the previous 24 months), no additional deposit will be required.
- c. The amount of business utility deposits is \$500 - \$1,500 depending on the customer history, size of business, and services applied for. The Housing Authority is a branch of the City and is exempt from paying deposits. The

amount of the commercial utility deposit will be set based on the results below.

<b>Commercial Deposit Chart For All Services</b>					
<b>Credit Score</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>Water-Sewer</b>	<b>All Services</b>
685 and up	Green	\$200	\$200	\$100	\$500
630-684	Yellow	\$400	\$400	\$200	\$1,000
0-629	Red	\$600	\$600	\$300	\$1,500

<b>Commercial Deposit Chart for Total Electric</b>				
<b>Credit Score</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Total</b>
685 and up	Green	\$300	\$100	\$400
630-684	Yellow	\$600	\$150	\$750
0-629	Red	\$750	\$250	\$1,000

6. Stopping Service

- a. Payment arrangements are available to prevent an account being sent to collection. All accounts that have been final billed and remain unpaid after 60 days will be sent for outside collection. The customer will be responsible for any collection fees.

7. Billing Schedule

- a. ~~Our customers are divided into two cycles based on location. This allows us to process the bills and payments for about half of our customers at a time.~~
- b. When any of the dates are on Saturday or Sunday, the actual date is the following Monday. The actual dates will be printed on the bills each month.
- c. Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 due 15<sup>th</sup> – delinquent 16<sup>th</sup> – cut off – 20<sup>th</sup>
- d. ~~Cycle 2 due 20<sup>th</sup> – delinquent 21<sup>st</sup> – cut off – 25<sup>th</sup>~~

8. Payments

- a. City Hall lobby hours are 8 AM ~~to noon and 1 PM~~ to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. We are closed from noon until 1 PM each day. Utility bills may be paid with cash, check, money order, MasterCard or Visa (debit or credit).

- b. After hours payments may be placed in the night drop box in the alley beside City Hall. Please do not leave cash in the night drop box.
- c. The night drop box is opened each workday at 8 AM daily. Payments are posted immediately. Payments placed in the night drop box after 8 AM will not be credited until the box is opened the following morning. If payments are not in the box by 8 AM late fees will be applied on the delinquent date. Mail is handled in the same manner as the drop box.
- d. On-line payment – You may pay on-line on the city’s web site ([www.monticelloga.org](http://www.monticelloga.org)) by going to City Services – Utilities.
- e. Bank Drafts – Bank draft forms are available in the office or on-line.
- ~~f. You may also pay your utility bill at either the Bank of Monticello or McIntosh State Bank in Monticello. The banks are only able to accept payments for bills that are not past due.~~
- g. Other payments – We offer budget billing and contract payments for past due amounts as explained below.

#### 9. Returned Checks

- a. Checks returned for insufficient funds are charged back to the customer’s account with a \$35 returned check fee. They are not re-deposited. A door hanger/notice will notify the customer of the returned check and demand payment within 24 hours. Failure to redeem the check will result in interruption of service.
- b. If the customer has two or more returned checks in twelve months, the account status will change to cash, money order, or cashiers check. A letter will be sent to the customer notifying that a personal check will not be accepted as a form of payment.

10. Late Fees - An account is considered past due if it is not paid by the due date shown on the utility bill. A late fee of \$20 is posted to unpaid accounts the day after the due date. Payments placed in the night drop box after 8 AM will not be credited until the box is opened the following morning. If payments are not in the box by 8 AM late fees will be applied on the delinquent date. Mailed payments are treated in the same manner as the drop box.

#### 11. Fees

- a. Before 3 PM, the reconnect fee is \$55, after 3 PM the reconnect fee is \$85.

- b. The fee to re-read meter, if the original reading is found to be correct is \$20.
- c. The fee to disconnect and reconnect the utility service so private work may be performed is \$150.

#### 12. Disconnection for non payment

- a. Customers who have not paid the bill by the cut off date are subject to having service disconnected or cut off.
- b. The past due amount must be paid within five days of the due date to prevent interruption of service. For example, if the unpaid bill was due on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the service will be scheduled for delinquent disconnect as early as the 20<sup>th</sup>. ~~If the unpaid bill was due on the 20<sup>th</sup>, the service will be scheduled for delinquent disconnect as early as the 25<sup>th</sup>.~~
- c. Once the cut off work order for nonpayment leaves City Hall the reinstatement fee must be paid whether or not the service was actually turned off prior to the customer paying the past due balance.
- d. Failure to receive a bill does not exempt the customer from penalty due to late payment or from disconnection for nonpayment.

#### 13. Theft of Service

- a. It is the responsibility of City utility workers to turn on and off all City utilities within our customer service area. As a customer you are not permitted to turn on your utility service. Customers are not permitted to cross connect any utility service from a neighbor. Any customer who turns on a utility service will be subject to a fine of \$500 for the first offense and \$1,000 for the second offense and may be subject to prosecution in Municipal Court.

#### 14. Medical Alerts

- a. The City requires annual certification on the approved city form by a medical professional that a special need for electricity exists in the home which will allow additional notification of impending delinquent disconnect. It is the responsibility of the customer to provide the City of Monticello with annual verification that the reason for a "MEDICAL ALERT" exists.
- b. A delinquent notice, in the form of a door hanger, will be placed on the main entrance to the home which will allow the customer an additional 48 hours to pay the bill. Work orders attached to a "MEDICAL ALERT

ACCOUNT” bear a starred border stating ‘MEDICAL ALERT’. The meters are marked with a green seal.

- c. As additional notification, a certified, return receipt requested copy of the door hanger is sent to the account holder requesting payment.

#### 15. Severe weather

- a. The City shall not discontinue electric or gas utility service to a residential customer for an unpaid bill when the forecasted temperature within a 24 hour period beginning on the date of the proposed disconnection is 32 degrees or below.
- b. The City shall not discontinue electric or gas utility service to a residential customer for an unpaid bill when the forecasted temperature within a 24 hour period beginning on the date of the proposed disconnection is 95 degrees or above.

#### 16. Contract Agreements – We offer an interest-free payment plan as an option to prevent interruption of service. Customers are limited to two contracts within a twelve month period. A copy of the actual contract is shown at the end of these policies.

- a. You agree, in writing, to pay 25% or a minimum of \$50 of the past due balance at the time of agreement and the remainder of the past due amount in equal installments of at least \$50 for a maximum duration of six monthly payments beginning with the next billing period.
- b. You also agree, in writing, to pay all future bills including the installment payment by the due dates. If payments are not received by the due date, the agreement will be voided and service subject to disconnection. There will be no prior notification if the contract is voided through nonpayment. Service is subject to immediate disconnection and the entire contract and the current bill become due plus any late or reconnection fees.
- c. If you have successfully completed a previous contract, you may request one additional new contract. Customers are limited to two contracts within a twelve month period.
- d. Contracts are granted by the customer service representative and approved by the City Clerk.
- e. All contract arrangements must be made prior to cut-off day.

#### 17. Budget Billing

- a. The purpose of budget billing is to allow the customer to pay an average bill and avoid the very high monthly bills and the very low monthly bills. All customers with at least thirteen month's history at their current address are eligible for budget billing. The city will compute a budget billing amount that the customer will pay each month instead of the actual billed amount. At the end of six months, the city will refund to the customer's account the amount paid above the actual billing amount or the city will bill the customer for the amount owed if the actual billing amount exceeds the budget billing amount.
- b. The customer will submit an application form for budget billing that will state all the conditions connected with budget billing. The city will compute the monthly budget billing amount using the past 13 months' bills. Any current balance will be added to the budget billing amount and scheduled to be paid within six months.
- c. If the customer agrees to proceed based on the budget billing amount, then the second part of the application form will be signed to serve as a contract. The city will track the actual bill each month and compare it to the budget billing amount.
- d. At the end of six months, the customer will be given a summary of the status of his/her account. Any balance owed will be paid to the city and any balance overpaid will be credited to the customer's account. The customer may decide to continue the budget billing program for another six months, in which case a new budget billing amount will be calculated and another contract completed.
- e. If the customer wishes to withdraw from the program, or if the budget billing amount is not paid by the due date, the current balance along with the current bill will become due and payable.

## 18. Outages, Interruptions, and Repairs

- a. For all problems, please call city hall at 706-468-6062. After 5 PM and on the weekend or holidays, call 911.
- b. Gas – If you smell gas, call city hall (706-468-6062) or 911 immediately.
- c. Sewer overflows – Call city hall (706-468-6062) or 911 immediately.
- d. Before doing any work on your property involving digging, remember to CALL BEFORE YOU DIG -- 1-800-282-7411

## 19. Requests for sewer repair

- a. City responsibility for sewer maintenance is from the sewer main to the property line. Private responsibility for maintenance begins at the property line and extends to the residence or commercial or industrial building. Customers that experience sewer problems should call a plumber first to determine where the problem is located. Customers should provide sewer clean outs on their property so that proper maintenance can be provided by a plumber.
- b. If it is determined that the problem is in the sewer main or on the service line in the right-of-way, City utility personnel should be called to provide needed repairs. If the problem is on private property, City personnel cannot go on private property to provide sewer maintenance. Customers will be charged a fee of \$35 if the City responds and the problem is a private matter and a plumber was not called first.



**CONTRACT FORM  
NEED HELP WITH YOUR UTILITY BILL??**

The City of Monticello offers a program to allow you to catch up your past due utility bill by offering a contract that will allow you to make payments.

The City allows one contract arrangement within a 12 month period. The contract is between the City and the person named on the utility account. Identification is required.

To begin the contract, you must pay \$50.00 or 25% of the past due amount, whichever is greater.

The remainder of your past due balance is paid in installments along with your next regular utility bills. The minimum installment payment is \$50.00, except for the final installment, which would be the total remainder due.

<b>Remaining Balance of:</b>	
\$100.00 or less	2 payments
Over \$100.00, but less than \$200.00	3 payments
Over \$200.00, but less than \$300.00	4 payments
Over \$300.00, but less than \$400.00	5 payments
Over \$400.00	6 payments

**AS A PART OF THE PAYMENT CONTRACT, IT IS AGREED THAT THE NEXT UTILITY BILLS WILL BE PAID IN A TIMELY MANNER. FAILURE TO PAY BOTH THE CONTRACT AMOUNT AND YOUR NEXT UTILITY BILL BY THE DUE DATES WILL RESULT IN INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE UNTIL PAID IN FULL.**

No late fees are added to contracts paid timely. Balances may be paid in full at any time. Reconnect fees are applied to any disconnected services.

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Account Holder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Balance due as of \_\_\_\_\_ Down Payment \_\_\_\_\_

Number of remaining payments \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of each payment \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amended March 14, 2023