

WATER COMMITTEE MEETING

May 21, 2024

The Village of Ashmore Water Committee met on May 21, 2024 in the Ashmore Municipal Office. Chair Bill Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Proper notice of the meeting was given.

Present: Chair Bill Edwards, Thomas Grissom, Dane Perdieu

Absent: Bryan Watson

Also Present: President Kurt Crail, Clerk / Water Collector Jackie Freezeland

Freezeland asked the committee to allow her to change the water billing policy as it pertains to the monthly billing/collection timeline. She advised that the current timeline allows billing cycles to overlap, which creates confusion on the billing postcards for about 10% of residents. Those who wait until the last minute to pay their bills during the overlap have an incorrect billing amount on their bills, and the format does not identify how much of their bill is past due. Furthermore, those who are delinquent receive additional fees after the next-cycle bills are printed; the fees, therefore, do not appear on the bill until they are late.

Freezeland reminded the Board that when she was hired in 2015, the due date for the water bills had been the 12th, and in 2016 she had pushed to have it moved to the 20th, allowing residents more time to make payments. That change, however, did not reduce the number of late payments as it was intended.

Freezeland pointed out that residents have more payment options now than they used to. By contracting with Paystar, residents can now log in and pay online more easily, and they can also pay by phone 24-hours/day using Paystar's automated system. Also, the new website makes it easier for residents to be informed about these options.

Committee members discussed the notifications to residents, the timeline for transitioning to the new dates, and ideas for minimizing the hardship for and backlash from residents.

Edwards motioned to recommend the water policy changes to the Board, and Perdieu seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Once approved by the Board, the billing timeline will be as follows effective in July:

- 1st – Residents receive bills *no change*
- 15th – Bills become due *changed from 20th*
- 16th – 10% Late Fee applied, late notices mailed *changed from 21st*
- 25th – Late notices due *changed from 1st*
- 26th - \$25 Delinquent Fee applied, water service deactivated *changed from 2nd*
- 27th – Water Bills calculated for new billing cycle *no change*

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m. on a motion by Perdieu, seconded by Grissom. All voted in favor.

Jackie Freezeland
Village of Ashmore