

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 46, UTILITIES, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WEST PLAINS, MISSOURI BY AMENDING SECTION 46-3, SERVICE APPLICATION; SERVICE AGREEMENT REQUIRED; CONNECTION CHARGES, SECTION 46-98, PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS, SECTION 46-100, PROCEDURE FOR PAYING BILLS, BY REMOVING SECTION 46-99, AUTHORITY TO DELAY BILLING DURING CUSTOMER'S VACATION AND BY INCREASING THE CURRENT DEPOSIT RATE FOR RESIDENTIAL ACCOUNTS.

WHEREAS, the City of West Plains desires to amend Chapter 46, Utilities by amending the sections below:

Section 46-3: Service application; service agreement required; connection charges

(a) Photo Identification is required.

(c) Requests for new service must be made in person at the office during regular business hours in order to complete contract agreement and pay necessary deposits and fees. Service requests to existing accounts (Landlords) may be made in person at the utility office, via fax at 417-256-4953 or via email at cashier@westplains.net and the service fee will be billed to the account. These three methods are acceptable for the purpose of verification. Telephones requests will be direct to follow one of the above mentioned avenues. Requests via email or fax must include: address of service, type of service requested, effective date of service requested and confirmation of billing address. Any service requested after hours will result in double the standard service fee.

Section 46-98: Procedures for handling delinquent accounts

(1) Cutoff notices shall be mailed out on the third day after the account becomes delinquent, and a penalty charge of \$25 shall be added to the account.

(2) Cutoff notices shall specify that if the account is not paid in full, prior to the disconnect date listed on the notice, the service will be subject to disconnect and an additional Delinquent Fee charge of \$50.00 will be billed to the account. In the event of services being disconnected for non-payment, the utility department shall be responsible for reconnection of service within one business day of the payment in full including all fees. Reconnections requested after regular business hours will result in double the Delinquent Fee. The notice shall further specify that if the customer believes the billing is incorrect that the customer shall file a written statement with the city clerk, within three days from the date of mailing the notice, setting forth his reasons for believing that the billing is incorrect.

(7) Credit arrangements may be made with the utility department for inactive or finalized accounts only. Active accounts must be paid in full or will be subject to disconnection of service. If the account is not paid prior to the disconnect date listed on the late notice, the additional fees will be applied to the account.

Section 46-100: Procedure for Payment of Bills

All utility bills are due on the 10th monthly (or closest next business day).

Utility bills may be paid via the following methods:

- In person at the Utility Counter at City Hall
- Utility Payment Drop Box located outside the Utility Office in City Hall Parking Lot
- Online at www.westplains.net
- By mail to P.O. Box 710 or 1910 Holiday Lane, West Plains, MO 65775
- Local West Plains Banks, Arvest Banks or Wood and Huston Banks (Payments only accepted at these West Plains locations with stub for exact payment amount and will not be accepted after the 10th of the month.)
- Automatic checking or savings bank draft (which can be arranged in the office at City Hall)

Removal of Section 46-99: Authority to delay billing during customer's vacation.

Deposits for standard residential accounts regardless of owner or tenant will be \$100.

Accounts with water/sewer/trash only will require a \$25 deposit.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST PLAINS, MISSOURI AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: The above sections are hereby amended.

Section 2: The implemented fees will be in place April 1, 2018.

Section 3: That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage and approval.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 20th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2017.

CITY OF WEST PLAINS, MISSOURI

BY: _____
MAYOR JACK PAHLMANN

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK MALLORY PREWETT

- **Sec. 46-3. - Service application; service agreement required; connection charges.**

(a)

Any person desiring any utility service furnished by the city shall make application therefor to the city utility office. Such application shall contain the applicant's name, address and the uses for which such utility service is desired. [Photo ID is required.]

- **Sec. 46-3. - Service application; service agreement required; connection charges.**

Current verbiage:

~~Service requests which are telephoned in to the office shall be honored, provided that the party requesting service presents himself to the utility office within three days and signs a service agreement and makes arrangements for necessary deposits.~~

Proposed: Requests for new service must be made in person at the office during regular business hours in order to complete contract agreement and pay necessary deposits and fees. Service requests to existing accounts (Landlords) may be made in person at the utility office, via fax at (417) 256-4953 or via email at cashier@westplains.net and the service fee will be billed to the account. These three methods are acceptable for the purpose of verification. Telephoned requests will be directed to follow one of the above mentioned avenues. Requests via email or fax must include: address of service, type of service requested, effective date of service requested and confirmation of billing address.

- **Sec. 46-98 (1,2, and 7) "Procedures for handling delinquent accounts"**

- (1) Cutoff notices shall be mailed out on the third day after the account becomes delinquent, and a penalty charge of ~~\$10.00~~ **\$25.00** shall be added to the account.
- (2) Cutoff notices shall specify that if the account is not paid in full, ~~or suitable credit arrangements made~~ [prior to the disconnect date listed on the notice, the service will be subject to disconnect and an additional Delinquent Fee charge of ~~\$20.00~~ **\$50.00** will be billed to the account. **In the event of services being disconnected for non-payment, the utility department shall be responsible for**

reconnection of service within one business day of the payment in full including all fees. Reconnections requested after regular business hours will result in double the Delinquent Fee. The notice shall further specify that if the customer believes the billing is incorrect that the customer shall file a written statement with the city clerk, within three days from the date of mailing the notice, setting forth his reasons for believing that the billing is incorrect.

(4)

Accounts having an outstanding balance of less than \$15.00 shall not be disconnected for nonpayment, but the balance shall be added to the next bill.

(7) ~~The city utility office shall have authority to approve credit arrangements on delinquent accounts less than \$100.00. Credit arrangements on delinquent accounts in excess of \$100.00 must be approved by the city council.~~

Proposed: Credit arrangements may be made with the utility department for inactive or finalized accounts only. Active accounts must be paid in full or will be subject to disconnection of service. If the account is not paid prior to the disconnect date listed on the late notice, the additional fees will be applied to the account.

- Sec. 46-100 Procedure for Payment of Bills

~~All utility bills may be paid either in person at the designated office or by mail.~~

Proposed: All utility bills are due on the 10th monthly (or closest business day). Utility bills may be paid via the following methods:

-In person at the Utility Counter at City Hall

-Utility Payment Drop Box located outside the Utility Office in City Hall Parking Lot

-Online at westplains.net

-By mail to PO BOX 710 or to 1910 Holiday Lane

-Local West Plains Banks, Arvest Banks or Wood and Huston Banks (Payments only accepted at these West Plains locations with stub for exact payment amount and will not be accepted after the 10th of the month.)

- Automatic checking or savings bank draft (which can be arranged in office)

- Sec. 46-99. - Authority to delay billing during customer's vacation.

Current verbiage:

~~The city utility office is hereby authorized to hold up the payment of utility bills during the period of a customer's vacation and permit the utility customer to pay on return from his vacation with specific arrangements made by the utility customer relating to the time of beginning the vacation and termination of the vacation so that the penalty otherwise imposed by [section 46-98](#) would be deferred.~~

Proposed: Removal of entirety.

Fee Comparison of Current Charges : November 2017

	Late Fee	“Re-Connect” Fee	Deposit Rent/Own
West Plains	10.00	20.00	100/25
Lebanon	10% of balance	30.00	100/100
Nixa	5% of balance	50.00	95-175/50-175 (*backup)
Boliver 100/100	10% of balance	35.00 (**wt mtr only)	
Rolla	10% of balance	50.00	300/300
Houston	10% of balance	40.00	400/350

*Nixa offers deposit breaks for customer with Natural Gas Backup

**Boliver only provides water

Average # Late Notices Monthly

1,075

Average # of Accounts Actually Cut

168

Based on last five months:

October 2017	1,067 notices totaling \$238,021.35 due	105 Cut
September 2017	1,124 notices totaling \$273,464.87 due	271 Cut
August 2017	961 notices totaling \$230,677.30 due	149 Cut

July 2017	1,095 notices totaling \$209,807.90 due	147 Cut
June 2017	1,130 notices totaling \$192,861.57 due	169 Cut