



Staff Report – Ordinance 25-003 Utility Billing Revisions

April 7, 2025 Council Regular Meeting

Ordinance 25-003 Utility Billing Revisions

Presenter: Matthew Thorup, Assistant Finance Director

Time Estimate: 10 minutes

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BACKGROUND: Staff presented proposed changes to City Council at the December 2, 2024 workshop related to utility billing. General information was provided at this meeting, highlighting some upcoming changes for utility billing including changing to monthly utility billing and allowing tenant billing. These code changes were presented to City Council at the March 17, 2025 Workshop for review.

SUMMARY: Ordinance 25-003 revises Camas Municipal Code (CMC) Chapters 13.40, 13.44 and 13.64 for these changes.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: A monthly utility bill provides several benefits to citizens, as we will be able to identify any potential leaks sooner with more frequent readings, monthly bills will be smaller than the current bi-monthly bill which means more stable and predictable bills, and smaller bills will lead to fewer disconnections for non-payment. Additionally, the ability for tenants to sign up for their own utilities will make for a more efficient utility billing process.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: The changes to the utility billing calendar may be a challenge as citizens get accustomed to a different billing cadence.

BUDGET IMPACT: These changes do not have any budget impact. However, a monthly billing cadence will improve the cash flow for the utility funds.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that Council consider the adoption of Ordinance No 25-003.

ORDINANCE NO. 25-003

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CAMAS, WASHINGTON,
RELATED TO UTILITY BILLING AND AMENDING
CHAPTERS 13.40, 13.44, AND 13.64 OF THE CAMAS
MUNICIPAL CODE .

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CAMAS DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section I

Section **13.40.020, Subsection B – Meter – Reading** is hereby amended to provide as follows:

B. Other than regularly scheduled reading of water meters, water meters may be read by the city on the day a notice of change of tenancy or ownership is delivered to the city or as close as possible to such day as required in CMC 13.44.040.

Section II

Section **13.44.010, Subsections A. and D. - Charges – Metered Service – Billing intervals** is hereby amended to provide as follows:

A. All residential and most commercial water services shall be billed at regular intervals and shall be due and payable on the twenty-first day of each month following billing. Such billings shall be delinquent on the twenty-sixth day of the month following billing.

D. There shall be a penalty on all delinquent accounts assessed at the rate of five percent of the outstanding balance.

Section III

Section **13.44.015, Subsection B. - Billing Liability – Rental Properties** is hereby amended to provide as follows:

B. Except as hereinafter provided, all billings for utility services provided by the city shall be mailed to the record owner of the subject property at the record owner's address. In the event that billings are sent to a tenant or agent of the owner, the billing will become the responsibility of the tenant or agent as well as the property owner, and each can be held jointly and severally liable for such billing.

Section IV

Section 13.44.020, Subsection A. – Nonpayment – Shutoff – Hearing – Disconnection

Fees is hereby amended to provide as follows:

A. Whenever any charge for furnishing water and/or sewer services to any premises is not paid in full by the twenty-sixth day of the month following billing, the finance department shall give notice to the person or persons billed for such services at the address shown in the city's billing records of the city's intent to discontinue service if payment is not made. Such notice shall contain the following information:

1. The amount of the charges owing;
2. A statement that the person billed may request a hearing to contest the amount or validity of the charges;
3. A statement that if the charges are not paid in full or a hearing requested within ten days of the notice, the city will disconnect the service of water to such premises.

Section V

Section 13.44.040, Subsection A. – **Service Termination** is hereby amended to provide as follows:

A. Each customer about to vacate any premises supplied with water service by the city shall give notice of their intended removal at least two days prior thereto; specifying the date change-in-ownership or tenancy actually occurred, otherwise, they will be responsible for all water supplied to the premises until the city water department has notice of such removal.

Section VI

Section 13.64.060 – **Sewer Volume Charges** is hereby amended to provide as follows:

The sewer volume charges for each residential customer from November 1 through February 28 shall be based upon that customer's actual water consumption during that period. The four billing cycles between November 1 through February 28 shall be the customer's "four billing cycle water consumption history." The sewer volume charges for each residential unit for the remainder of the year shall be based on the average water consumption in the previous "four billing cycle water consumption history." Zero water consumption in any of the four water consumption history billing periods shall not constitute a "complete four billing cycle water consumption history."

A. Residential customers that have a "complete four billing cycle water consumption history" as specified above shall be charged the applicable inside city or outside city monthly sewer charge and volume charge as set forth in the chart in Section 13.64.010 above.

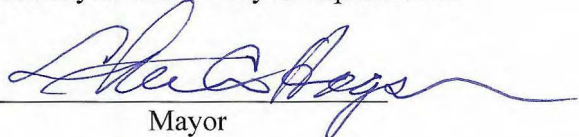
B. Residential customers that do not have a "complete four billing cycle water consumption history" as specified above, shall be charged the applicable inside city or outside city monthly service charge set forth in Section 13.64.010 and a volume charge equivalent to seven hundred cubic feet of water usage as the monthly sewer billing rate.

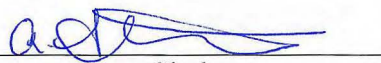
C. Residential customers may apply for a reduction in sewer rates when, due to a qualifying leak as defined in Section 13.44.030, the sewer charge is substantially increased. The amount of the reduction shall be calculated in the same manner as a water leak credit as set forth in Section 13.44.030.

Section VII

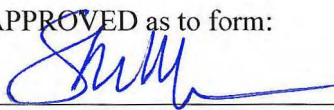
This ordinance shall take force and be in effect five (5) days from and after its publication according to law.

PASSED BY the Council and APPROVED by the Mayor this 7th day of April 2025.

SIGNED: 
Mayor

SIGNED: 
Clerk

APPROVED as to form:


City Attorney