

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAUREL CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 25 – WATER, ARTICLE IV. RATES AND CHARGES SECTION 25-52. POLICY, B. WATER BILL COLLECTIONS (1) AND (5) TO INCREASE THE REINSTATEMENT FEE

WHEREAS, the administration has determined that an increase in the fee to reinstate water service following disconnection for non-payment is necessary to reduce chronic non-payment, recover the City’s rising service costs, and decrease the number of water service cut-offs; **and**

WHEREAS, the current reinstatement fee of \$32.00 does not adequately reflect the labor, fuel, equipment, and administrative expenses associated with service terminations and reconnections

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Laurel City Council that the Laurel Code of Ordinances Chapter 25 – WATER, ARTICLE IV. RATES AND CHARGES. SECTION 25-52. POLICY, B. WATER BILL COLLECTIONS (1) AND (5) be amended as follows:

The current ordinance states:

ARTICLE IV. RATES AND CHARGES.

Section 25-52. Policy

B. Water Bill Collections

In order to avoid interruption of service, accounts must be kept current. All accounts which have not been paid within ten days of due date will be charged a late fee of three percent (3%) of balance.

(1) Should a bill reflect a previous balance, payment of the past due balance is due immediately upon receipt of the monthly bill. Failure to pay the past due balance may result in interruption of service. Failure to receive a bill does not release customer from obligation to pay. **NO SEPARATE NOTICE OF IMPENDING DISCONNECTION WILL BE SENT** to the customer prior to interruption of service. If payment of account scheduled for cut-off is not paid by 4:00pm on the day prior to cut-off, a service fee of thirty-two dollars (\$32.00) will be added to the balance.

(2) Customers with previous balances may be given special consideration for extension of payment in only two ways

a. Special arrangements may be made under conditions and terms enumerated in Sub-Section C. *Water Customer Service Manager and Administration Duties and Roles* found in Article IV. Rates and Charges, Section 25-52, Policy, of this Chapter.

b. Customers on a low fixed income consisting of one check per month may be granted a grace period consisting of the number of days between receipt of water bill and date on which said check is received each month. In order to qualify for this exception, the customer must verify that he/she receives only one check per month, must disclose the amount of the check, and document the date upon which the check is received each month.

Source: Ordinance No. 1337-1999, 5-4-99; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-07; Ordinance No. 1527 2008, Art. IV, §25-52, 11-26-08, Ordinance 1613-2014, 6-18-2014; Ordinance 1629-2015, 11-03-2015

c. Customers that receive a large bill due to a leak on his/her water line can request an adjustment in the charges. Only one (1) leak adjustment will be allowed per customer in any twelve (12) month period. To receive an adjustment in charges the customer shall provide proof that his /her leak was repaired. Proof would include a copy of bill from a licensed plumber along with proof of payment. If the repair was made by the customer, a written statement along with copies of receipts for any material used in the repair will be considered proof. If the customer provides the required proof of repairs, the billing department is authorized to adjust his/her account to the average of the last three (3) months after the leak is fixed (the account will be monitored for three (3) months to insure the leak was fixed before the adjustment will be made). However, the monthly bill cannot be adjusted below the minimum water usage set forth by the City Ordinance of three thousand (3000) gallons. The adjustment also can be retroactive for more than two (2) months.

Source: Ordinance No. 1337-1999, 5-4-1999; Ordinance No. 1487-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-07, Ordinance No. 1613-2014, 6-18-2014; Ordinance No. 1621-2015, 2-5-2015; Ordinance 1629-2015, 11-03-2015.

d. Regardless of all other adjustments, pending adjustments, and other reasons for delaying full payment, the customer is responsible for paying the minimum water and sewer bill. Service will be terminated if the minimum charges are not paid.

Source: Ordinance No. 1461-2005, 7-5-2005; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-2007; Ordinance No. 1509-2008, 2-05-2008; Ordinance No. 1597-2012,, 11-20-2012

(3) Water may be reinstated after receipt of the delinquent amount plus a reinstatement fee and/or damage fees. No service disconnected for non-payment will be restored after 5:00 P.M. unless the arrears and late payment fee are paid before 4:00 P.M.

Source: Ordinance No. 1337-1999, 5-4-99; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-07; Ordinance No. 1527 2008, Art. IV, § 25-52, 11-26-08; Ordinance No. 1621-2015, 2-05-2015

(4) If the check for the payment of water, sewer and garbage is not honored upon the first presentation to the bank, a Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) fee in the amount of \$40.00 will be charged to the customer. If a second presentation is made and the check is not honored, the customer's water service will be disconnected and a second NSF Fee in the amount of \$50.00 will be charged. The City may require cash or money order payment only from any customer with a history of NSF. All reinstatements will require the payment of the current balance including any fees charged. No partial payments will be accepted once the water has been turned off.

Source: Ordinance No. 1337-1999, 5-4-99; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-07, Ordinance No. 1613-2014, 6-18-2014.

(5). FEES:

Insufficient Fund Fee --- \$ 40.00

Transfer Fee --- \$ 35.00

Reinstatement Fee --- \$ 32.00

Source: Ordinance No. 1171-1990, 6-19-90; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-53, 8-7-07; Ordinance No. 1527 2008; Art. IV, §25-53, 11-26-08, Ordinance No. 1613-2014, 6-18-2014.

The amended ordinance will state (changes in bold):

ARTICLE IV. RATES AND CHARGES.

Section 25-52. Policy

B. *Water Bill Collections*

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(2) Customers with previous balances may be given special consideration for extension of payment in only two ways

a. Special arrangements may be made under conditions and terms enumerated in Sub-Section C. *Water Customer Service Manager and Administration Duties and Roles* found in Article IV. Rates and Charges, Section 25-52, Policy, of this Chapter.

b. Customers on a low fixed income consisting of one check per month may be granted a grace period consisting of the number of days between receipt of water bill and date on which said check is received each month. In order to qualify for this exception, the customer must verify that he/she receives only one check per month, must disclose the amount of the check, and document the date upon which the check is received each month.

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c. Customers that receive a large bill due to a leak on his/her water line can request an adjustment in the charges. Only one (1) leak adjustment will be allowed per customer in any twelve (12) month period. To receive an adjustment in charges the customer shall provide proof that his /her leak was repaired. Proof would include a copy of bill from a licensed plumber along with proof of payment. If the repair was made by the customer, a written statement along with copies of receipts for any material used in the repair will be considered proof. If the customer provides the required proof of repairs, the billing department is authorized to adjust his/her account to the average of the last three (3) months after the leak is fixed (the account will be monitored for three (3) months to ensure the leak was fixed before the adjustment will be made). However, the monthly bill cannot be adjusted below the minimum water usage set forth by the City Ordinance of three thousand (3000) gallons. The adjustment also can be retroactive for more than two (2) months.

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d. Regardless of all other adjustments, pending adjustments, and other reasons for delaying full payment, the customer is responsible for paying the minimum water and sewer bill. Service will be terminated if the minimum charges are not paid.

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(4) If the check for the payment of water, sewer and garbage is not honored upon the first presentation to the bank, a Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) fee in the amount of \$40.00 will be charged to the customer. If a second presentation is made and the check is not honored, the customer's water service will be disconnected and a second NSF Fee in the amount of \$50.00 will be charged. The City may require cash or money order payment only from any customer with a history of NSF. All reinstatements will require the payment of the current balance including any fees charged. No partial payments will be accepted once the water has been turned off.

Source: Ordinance No. 1337-1999, 5-4-99; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-52, 8-7-07, Ordinance No. 1613-2014, 6-18-2014.

(5). FEES:

Insufficient Fund Fee ---	\$ 40.00
Transfer Fee ---	\$ 35.00
Reinstatement Fee ---	\$ 64.00

Source: Ordinance No. 1171-1990, 6-19-90; Ordinance No. 1497-2007, Art. IV, § 25-53, 8-7-07; Ordinance No. 1527 2008; Art. IV, §25-53, 11-26-08, Ordinance No. 1613-2014, 6-18-2014.

This Ordinance shall take effect from and after thirty (30) days following the second reading of the ordinance.

SO ORDAINED this the 2nd day of **JUNE**, A.D., 2026. Motion was made by Councilperson Amos, and seconded by Councilperson Scruggs, for the adoption of the First Reading of said Ordinance.

Upon roll call vote, the result follows:

YEAS: Capers, Scruggs, Thomas, Amos, Allen

NAYS: None

ABSTAINING: None

ABSENT: Kelly, Carmichael

The Vice-President thereupon declared the motion carried and the First Reading of this ordinance approved this the 2ND day of JUNE, A.D., 2026.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

ATTESTED AND SUBMITTED TO THE MAYOR BY THE CLERK OF THE COUNCIL ON
JUNE _____, 2026.

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

APPROVED () DATE _____

VETOED () DATE _____

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK
