



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 20-1546A, **Version:** 1

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### **Subject:**

Resolution to waive the Pinellas County Utilities Department customer late fees in connection with COVID-19.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of the resolution to waive Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) Department customer late fees in connection with COVID-19.

- PCU began suspending normal billing protocols starting on March 16, 2020 through July 31, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On August 1, 2020, PCU resumed normal billing protocols and implemented a 12-month customer repayment plan for past due balances.
- The repayment plan was enacted under an Emergency Order and was presented to the BCC on the August 11, 2020 agenda.
- The suspension of normal billing protocols resulted in the deferment of late fees that accumulated to a total amount of \$668,320.48.
- The recommended action will waive the assessed late fees accumulated during March 16, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

To lessen the financial impact on customers due to COVID-19, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, via this resolution, finds it appropriate to waive the accumulated late fees in a not-to-exceed amount of \$668,320.48. Authorize the Chairman to sign and the Clerk of the Circuit Court to attest.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of County services and support

### **Summary:**

In response to COVID-19, the Pinellas County Utilities Department suspended normal processes for non-payment of bills to prevent water service shutoffs from March 16, 2020 through July 31, 2020. The purpose of this action was to ensure customers had access to clean water, and this action was in the interest of public health.

The Board of County Commissioners, via this resolution, finds it appropriate to waive these late fees in a not-to-exceed amount of \$668,320.48.

### **Background Information:**

The Pinellas County Utilities Department received approval and authorization on July 23, 2020 to

reinstate normal billing practices effective August 1, 2020. Late fees, in the amount of \$668,320.48, have accumulated in association with Pinellas County Utilities Department's modifications to billing procedures.

**Fiscal Impact:**

No fiscal impact as the late fees in the not-to-exceed amount of \$668,320.48 were not included in the FY20 Revised Budget, FY20 estimate, or FY21 Tentative Budget.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Megan Ross, Director, Utilities

**Partners:**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Resolution 20