

**ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02**

**REGULATING THE UTILITY FEES, DEPOSITS, AND TERMS OF SERVICE FOR WATER, SEWER AND GAS SERVICE ACCOUNTS SERVED BY THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON, LOUISIANA**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON, LA:**

**SECTION 1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this ordinance is to update utility fees, deposits, and terms of service to ensure the Town of Washington's utility systems are sustainably managed and operated.

**SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms have the respective meanings ascribed to them in this section, except in those instances where the context indicates a different meaning.

- a) "The Town" refers to the Town of Washington, Louisiana.
- b) A residential utility customer shall be identified as individuals or a household that uses utilities for personal, non-commercial purposes. One residential structure per meter is allowed.
- c) A multi-residential user shall be identified as a customer who has two residential structures on one meter. At any time, it is determined that two residential structures are on one meter, it shall be defined as a multi-residential user.
- d) A commercial utility customer shall be identified as a business or organization that uses utilities for operational purposes.

**SECTION 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICES**

- a) In order to establish new service, the Town shall require a completed utility application, all requested documentation, and applicable deposits.
- b) Service shall not be granted to an account holder until ALL past due amounts with the Town are paid in full.
- c) All service locations must meet all Federal, State, or other regulatory body's safety requirements before services are allowed.
- d) If at any time it is found that the customer classification status is inaccurate, the Town shall have the authority to change the classification type and apply applicable rates or disconnect

services if necessary. The customer shall be responsible for any fees and deposits to prevent service disruptions.

#### **SECTION 4. DEPOSITS**

- a) The amount of the deposit will be determined per service provided.
- b) Utility deposits shall be held by the Town until the account is paid in full and closed. If a service is disconnected on an account while other services are still active the entire deposit will be held until the account is closed.
- c) The Town shall apply the account holder's available Deposit towards all services on the account at time of closure. If the Deposit is sufficient to pay the account in full, the Town shall return any remaining Deposit to the account holder.
- d) The Town shall not owe any interest to account holders on the Deposit.
- e) Any new service will require the current deposit amount at the time of request for those services.

See Attachment A for current deposits that will be effective through out the remainder of the FY 24-25. Each year the Utility fees and rates shall be stated in the budget message and reflect any changes.

#### **SECTION 5. ACCOUNT BILLING AND PAYMENT**

- a) The Town shall bill monthly services for the previous month by the end of the following month. Payments on accounts shall be due on the "Due Date" as noted on the bill.
- b) The Town will NOT accept cash payments.
- c) If an account is not paid in full by the Due Date, a penalty fee shall be added to the original amount owed and the account shall be identified as "DELINQUENT". The account shall remain delinquent until the total balance is paid in full.
- d) Accounts that have remained in DELINQUENT status as of thirty (30) days past the Due Date shall be closed and a final bill generated.
- e) Water, sewer, and gas consumption is the account holder's responsibility. The account shall be billed based upon all water and gas having been measured via the meter. The sewer shall be billed based on the water consumption measured via the water meter. The account holder is responsible for payment for all services measured by the meter. The account holder is responsible for monitoring the usage and the security of the portion of the system that is located on the serviced property.
- f) The service(s) will be supplied by one point of delivery and shall not be shared or resold.

## SECTION 6. FEES

The Town shall charge fees in accordance with the following:

- a) A connection servicing fee shall be charged each time service(s) are requested.
- b) To establish service to a location without an existing connection point to the primary system, the Town shall charge the appropriate Tap in Fees & Miscellaneous Fees, as applicable.
- c) To relocate the point of connection at an existing service location at customer request (ex. relocation of meter or service lines), the Town shall charge the appropriate Tap in Fees and/or Miscellaneous Fees, as applicable.
- d) A charge for gas meter, water meter, or other parts will be billed at the current material cost.
- e) Any scope of work outside of the normal maintenance completed by the Town of Washington's Utility department or contracted partners will be paid by the customer requesting service.
- f) A reread fee will be assessed when a customer requests a meter to be reread and results indicate the initial reading was accurate.
- g) A disconnect servicing fee will be assessed the date of disconnection for non-payment. The disconnect servicing fee may not be waived once the disconnection list is printed, unless due to a utility department error. The service(s) will be discontinued, and the meter(s) remain locked until the account is paid in full.
- h) A service fee will be applied if the town is called out for a service call, and it is determined the reason for the call is not a result of the town's utility infrastructure.
- i) The customer shall be fully responsible for the service line from the meter to the output of the delivered service.
- j) The Town shall charge for any fees, taxes or other charges imposed upon water, sewer or gas service by any Federal, State, or regulatory body.
- k) In the event a utility payment is returned as unpaid, the Town shall charge a Returned Funds Fee, which shall be added to the overall account balance.
- l) If a customer requests account information to be printed outside of the normal billing information provided, a Utility Bill/Information Printing Fee shall be charged.

See Attachment A for current fees that will be effective through out the remainder of the FY 24-25. Each year the Utility fees and rates shall be stated in the budget message and reflect any changes.

#### **SECTION 7. VIOLATION**

- a) Water meters and gas meters shall be the property of the Town. It shall be a violation of this Ordinance for any unauthorized person to tamper with, manipulate, or damage the water meter, gas meter, or other utility property of the town in any way.
- b) Account holders or anyone violating this Ordinance shall be subject to fees which offset the costs to repair or replace the meter or other property and a fine shall be paid by the account holder to the Town of Washington before water, gas and/or sewer delivery is continued.
- c) Severe or intentional violation of this ordinance is subject to the Violation/Tampering Fine according to the current fee schedule.

#### **SECTION 8. REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT**

- a) The Town shall conduct a comprehensive review of the utility system's fees, deposits, and terms of services during budget preparation. This process should be done at a minimum annually. The budget ordinance will reflect any changes.
- b) The Mayor has the authority to create policies and procedures to adhere to this ordinance.

#### **SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall take effect on March 1, 2025, and shall remain in force until amended or repealed by the Town Council.

#### **SECTION 10. SEVERABILITY**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED THAT** this ordinance repeals and replaces any previous ordinance or part thereof which is address herein.

**THIS ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED** on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024, the title having been read and the Ordinance advertised within the legal delays as provided for by law, and after been duly considered at a public hearing, a record vote was taken on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025. The final adoption of the foregoing ordinance having been duly moved and seconded, the roll was called, and the following votes were taken and recorded:

YEAS: Erick Fontenot, Beau Wilson, Rogers Malveaux, Tanya Doucet, Mary Lavergne  
NAYS: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

There being a favorable vote on the ordinance of at least a majority of the authorized members of the Town of Washington Council, the ordinance was declared adopted on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

**Attest:**

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing ordinance is a true and correct copy adopted at a regular meeting of the Mayor and the Council Members of the Town of Washington, Louisiana on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

  
**Town Clerk, Town of Washington**

This ordinance was delivered to the Mayor on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

This ordinance was approved by the Mayor on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

  
**Mayor, Town of Washington**

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**ATTACHMENT A**

The below fees are effective through out the remainder of the FY 24-25. Each year the Utility fees and rates shall be stated in the budget message and reflect any changes.

<b>Connection Servicing Fee</b>	\$60.00
<b>Tap In Fees – Water</b>	
¾ inch meter	\$ 550.00
1 inch meter	\$ 650.00
2 inch meter	\$ 800.00
<b>Tap In Fees - Sewer</b>	
	\$ 550.00
<b>Tap In Fees - Gas</b>	
	\$ 550.00
<b>Miscellaneous Fees</b>	
Penalty Fee	\$ 10.00
Meter Reread Fee (Gas or Water)	\$ 25.00
Disconnect Servicing Fee	\$ 75.00
Utility Bill/Information Printing Fee	\$ 5.00
Returned Funds Fee	\$ 40.00
Service Fee	\$ 60.00
Relocation, Boring, Trenching	at cost plus labor per service
Materials (non maintenance)	at cost per item plus 25% labor (if applicable)
Violation/ Tampering Fine	\$250.00

<b>Deposits for Residential Service</b>	
Water	\$ 150.00
Sewer	\$ 150.00
Gas	\$ 200.00
<b>Deposits for Commercial Service</b>	
Water	\$ 300.00
Sewer	\$ 300.00
Gas	\$ 500.00