

## City of North Canton Water High Usage Policy and Procedures

### **High usage, known reason:**

If the customer has usage of water that is significantly outside of their normal range and it is due to a known plumbing issue or leak (examples: running toilet, cracked pipe, leaking sprinkler system), the Director of Finance shall authorize to charge the customer for the actual gallons used but calculate the charge using the lowest possible rate per thousand gallons in the customer's category. The categories are residential inside, residential outside, business inside, and business outside. In addition, the Director of Finance shall contact the customer and offer a payment plan of up to 24 months. These monthly payments will be in addition to the customer's normal monthly bill and interest shall not be charged. During the payment plan period, penalties will not be charged on the outstanding balance if the customer is paying their normal monthly bill plus the payment plan amount on time each month. If the customer does not pay their normal monthly bill plus the payment plan amount each on time month, they would still be subject to penalties and water service could be shut-off for non-payment.

### **High usage, unknown reason:**

If the customer has usage of water that is significantly outside of their normal range and it is due to an unknown issue, the Water Distribution Department shall visit the property to inspect the meter and check for any other possible water issues. If the water usage returns to normal on the next reading, the meter will not be replaced. The Director of Finance shall authorize to charge the customer for the actual gallons used but calculate the charge using the lowest possible rate per thousand gallons in the customer's category. The categories are residential inside, residential outside, business inside, and business outside. In addition, the Director of Finance shall contact the customer and offer a payment plan of up to 24 months. These payments will be in addition to the customer's normal monthly bill and interest shall not be charged. During the payment plan period, penalties will not be charged on the outstanding balance if the customer is paying their normal monthly bill plus the payment plan amount on time each month. If the customer does not pay their normal monthly bill plus the payment plan amount on time each month, they would still be subject to penalties and water service could be shut-off for non-payment.

If the high usage continues, and neither the Water Distribution Department nor the customer can find the source of the problem, then the meter shall be replaced. If the replacement of the meter causes usage to return to the normal range, then the customer shall be charged only for their typical usage for the month(s) with high usage prior to the replacement of the meter (the lower of a 12 month average or usage in the same month of the prior year). If the replacement of the meter does not resolve the issue, then it shall be the customer's responsibility to find the issue.

### **Appealing a decision made in either scenario:**

If the customer disagrees with Director of Finance and/or the Water Distribution Department's decision in either of the scenarios above, the customer may appeal the decision to the Water Board. The appeal shall be in writing, shall state the basis for the appeal, and shall be presented to the Director of Finance within 30 days after the decision is mailed to the customer by regular mail. The Water Board's regularly scheduled meeting shall be the 4th Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m.

Unless the customer requests additional time and demonstrates good cause for delay, the Water Board shall schedule a hearing to be held within 60 days after receiving an appeal of the Director of Finance and/or Water Department's decision. The customer may also waive its appearance before the Board, and thereby, the Board shall base its decision upon the customer's written appeal. The customer may appear before the Water Board on appeal with or without legal counsel.

The Board shall affirm, reverse, or modify the Finance Director and/or Water Distribution Department's decision. It shall issue a final written decision within 60 days after the its final hearing, and shall send a copy to all parties within 15 days thereof. Its decision may be appealed to the Stark County Court of Common Pleas.

Although a customer's water service will not be shut off due to non-payment during the pendency of appeal, account penalties shall continue to accrue. The Water Board, however, may mitigate or remove account penalties as part of its appeal decision.