ORDINANCE NO. 2019-294

WHEREAS, the City of Dothan desires to institute the following changes to the current Code of Ordinances to formalize policies and procedures that have evolved since the last approved Code changes, and;

WHEREAS, Code of Ordinance changes are necessary to reflect change to policies and procedures as a result of the installation of an automated metering system and the addition of software to allow citizens to participate in a prepay program.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the City of Dothan, Alabama, as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 2, Administration, Article IV, Purchasing Procedures, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby partially amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-242. – Checks, drafts and credit cards in payment of city accounts.

(c) A convenience fee may apply for the use of credit/debit cards or e-checks.

Section 2. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article I, In General, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby partially amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102-1. - Identification of utility meters.

(a) It shall be the responsibility of the developer, contractor, builder or owner to ensure that all utility meters installed in trailer parks, multifamily dwellings and business or commercial buildings be properly identified by lot, apartment or address in accordance with the following and as required by the utilities director (The Land Management and E-911 addresses should coincide with the meter):

Sec. 102-2. - Altering or damaging equipment; city ownership of equipment.

(a) The city may suspend utility service to a customer or designee without notice and without terminating any agreement for service if the meters, pipes, wires, switches or cutoffs used in conducting, supplying, measuring or registering water and electricity and other city utility services serving the customer’s premises are altered, damaged or changed in any way, except by natural causes, so as to cause such meters, pipes, wires, switches or cutoffs to destroy, alter or prevent the registration of the service received. The city shall not be required to restore service after suspension in accordance with this subsection until the customer has complied with all reasonable requirements of the city designed to prevent a recurrence and the city has been reimbursed the full payment amount for service rendered and has been paid the cost of repairing and/or replacing such altered, changed or damaged meters, pipes, wires, switches or cutoffs.

1) The utility service supervisor will investigate all theft of service (TOS) with the Dothan Police Department and/or the Houston County Sheriff’s Department. The customer will be billed for the amount of usage since the final bill read date or cut off for non-payment work orders. These charges will be calculated by the billing division. The individual(s), as identified by law enforcement, will be charged with Theft of Service and given a deadline to have all calculated TOS amounts paid in full. If the TOS amount is not paid by said date, the utility service supervisor will sign a warrant for individual(s). In order to initiate service, an initial deposit or deposit increase will be required. This deposit shall be set as the maximum for highest risk and may include any outstanding/written off monies owed the City of Dothan be paid prior to initiation of service.

2) Individuals with a sewer only account are required to initiate the service as of the date of occupancy. Failure to initiate service may be considered TOS. The occupant will be notified of the calculated amount due for service usage and will be allowed two weeks from date of
notification to initiate the service. Upon notification, if the service is not initiated and/or the amount due is not paid within the allowed time period, a warrant may be issued for the occupant. In order to initiate service, payment of an initial deposit or deposit increase will be required. This deposit shall be set as the maximum for highest risk and may include any outstanding/written off monies owed the City of Dothan be paid prior to initiation of service.

(3) Individuals with a garbage only account are required to initiate the service within 30 days of occupancy. Failure to initiate service within this time frame may be considered TOS. The occupant will be notified of the calculated amount due for service usage and will be allowed two weeks from date of notification to initiate the service. Upon notification, if the service is not initiated and/or the amount due is not paid within the allowed time period, a warrant may be issued for the occupant. In order to initiate service, payment of an initial deposit or deposit increase will be required. This deposit shall be set as the maximum for highest risk and may include any outstanding/written off monies owed the City of Dothan be paid prior to initiation of service.

(4) Individuals with a water only account are required to initiate the service as of the date of occupancy. Failure to initiate service may be considered TOS. The occupant will be notified of the calculated amount due for service usage and will be allowed two weeks from date of notification to initiate the service. Upon notification, if the service is not initiated and/or the amount due is not paid within the allowed time period, a warrant may be issued for the occupant. In order to initiate service, payment of an initial deposit or deposit increase will be required. This deposit shall be set as the maximum for highest risk and may include any outstanding/written off monies owed the City of Dothan be paid prior to initiation of service.

(5) Garbage, sewer or water only customers, or any combination of the three services, who have a past due balance 60 days old or older will be considered TOS. The occupant will be notified of the calculated amount due for service usage and will be allowed two weeks from date of notification to make payment in full. If the amount due per the notification is not paid within the allowed time period, a warrant may be issued for the occupant. In order to maintain or initiate service, payment of an initial deposit or deposit increase will be required. This deposit shall be set as the maximum for highest risk and may include any outstanding/written off monies owed the City of Dothan be paid prior to initiation or continuance of service.

Section 3. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article II, Electric Service, Division 1, Generally, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby partially amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102-31. - Availability of electric service.

(a) Electric service is available in any and all areas served by the city-owned electric system.

(b) Each prospective customer desiring utility services will be required to complete a Dothan utility standard form of application for service and/or contract before service is supplied by the utility. At the time of making application for connection of service, the applicant must make payment of any fees or deposits as required. The applicant must present satisfactory identification that meets requirement 102-32 (13) prior to services being connected.

(c) Payments for utility services can be made in the following manner:

   (1) Cash.

   (2) Check (Excluding counter or starter checks) or Electronic Check (Applicable fee for e-check may apply).

   (3) Credit card/Debit card (MasterCard, Visa and Discover (upon availability)) with the conditions listed below:

      a. Cards may not be damaged or broken.

      b. Applicable fees for credit card/debit card may apply.
(4) Cashier's check/money order.
(5) Electronic draft.
(6) Wire transfer.
(7) Electronic Funds Transfer.

(e) To initiate service with Dothan Utilities, a customer, whether residential or commercial/industrial, must complete an application, provide adequate identification as prescribed in section 102-32(13) below, and provide documentation indicating right to reside or occupy the property (lease, property tax records, sales contract, etc.) to which service is being requested. For new construction within Dothan City Limits, the first occupants of said new construction are required to provide proof of certificate of occupancy. The responsible party of commercial accounts must also be the responsible party listed on any lease agreement or sales contract as well as the business license.

(j) Any owner/landlord may be billed for consumption and/or Theft of Services if there is no lease agreement on file in the Utility Collections Office or no police report has been filed for trespassing.

Sec. 102-32. - Deposit and Service Requirements

(1) If required, the domestic residential utility cash deposit for locations having electric metered service shall be a minimum of $100.00 designated as follows: $80.00 for electric service, $10.00 for water service and $10.00 for sewer service. Additional minimum deposits are $10.00 for irrigation, $10.00 for vapor lights and $10.00 for a fire line. If required, the domestic residential utility cash deposit for locations not having any metered service shall be a minimum of $100.00 designated as follows: $70 for sewer service and $30 for solid waste. For those accounts with solid waste service only, the minimum domestic residential deposit shall be $30.00.

(3) Additional residential deposit provisions are as follows:

a. Utility cash deposits for new service for residential customers with a previously charged-off account will be a minimum of the amount equivalent to a high risk deposit; i.e. $500.00. Payment of the deposit should be made in full prior to the initiation of service. The residential customer may choose the prepay option as prescribed in section 102-39 in lieu of paying the high risk deposit once proper software and equipment are in place.

1. Upon approval of the finance director or authorized representative, payment arrangements for outstanding balances from previous service addresses older than six months or outstanding returned items (plus interest) may be made and an agreement signed by the customer before the new service is connected. Payment arrangement contracts will stipulate the following for customer acknowledgement: (1) the payment plan account will not receive any billing or delinquent notices; (2) failure to make payments on scheduled due date will constitute disconnection of service for failure to comply; and (3) if disconnected for failure to comply, the service will not be eligible for after-hours reconnection of services without full payment.

2. Payment arrangements cannot be made on any returned item submitted for collections through the District Attorney's office.

3. All returned items previously remitted by the City of Dothan to the District Attorney's office must have an arrangement made through that office prior to service initiation.

4. Any customer granted the payment plan option for a previous service address in which the account was not satisfied will not be allowed to obtain additional payment plans for the same address. The balance at the previous address will be required to be paid in full in order to initiate new service.
b. No deposit shall be required for an established residential Dothan utility customer in "good standing". "Good standing" is a status granted to a customer having no previous charged-off accounts, no unpaid bills, no returned items, and no delinquencies in the most recent 12 months. Any customer with a previous payment plan must have satisfied all requirements of said payment plan. Once the plan has been paid in full for a minimum of 24 months and all the requirements listed above have been met, the customer may be considered for "good standing" status.

c. Established residential Dothan utility customers in "good standing" can make application for deposit refunds in the utility collection division. The refund will be issued as a credit to the next utility bill. If the customer has a high-risk or mid-level deposit, one-half of the deposit may be refunded after "good standing" status has been established for a period of one year. After two consecutive years of "good standing" status, the remaining one-half of the deposit may be refunded to the utility account.

d. In the event "good standing" status is revoked, the customer will be required to establish a deposit as specified in section 102-32 subsection (1). Upon meeting the requirements of subsection (3)(b) above, the customer - upon request - may be reconsidered for "good standing" customer status.

e. A deposit as required in section 102-32 subsection (1) will be established in the event the residential customer desiring temporary service does not have current utility service with the city and does not reside at the service address for which the deposit is being established.

(5) If required, commercial and industrial utility deposits shall be twice the average monthly bill but not less than $150.00 for electric service, $25.00 for water service and $25.00 for sewer service. Additional minimum deposits are to be set at $25.00 for vapor lights and $25.00 for a fire line. A surety bond may be accepted for commercial or industrial services calculated at four times the monthly average bill but not less than $1,000 as determined by the finance director, planning director, or authorized representative. If the credit of the applicant warrants a deposit in excess of those stated in this section, the finance director, planning director or authorized representative shall have the authority to require the applicant to provide an adequate deposit to protect the city's interest and mitigate risk.

(6) The existing commercial or industrial utility deposit is non-refundable, unless for discontinuance of service or for establishment of a surety bond in the amount equivalent to four times the monthly average bill. The minimum commercial/industrial surety deposit would not be less than $1,000. An existing commercial/industrial customer must be considered in "good standing" for 24 months in order to qualify for acceptance of a surety bond in lieu of a cash deposit. Any additional location acquired by the existing customer will require an additional deposit based on the requirements stated in chapter 102 of this Code.

(7) Temporary service can be granted to an active current customer (as specified in this section) to cut on service at an additional location and to a customer who has not previously abused the privilege of temporary service. The requestor of temporary service must be the owner of the property or a designee of the property owner. Once a customer has three services active for temporary service, a business license is required. All temporary services must be initiated in the same name as used on business license.

(10) No utility cash deposit is required on a temporary electric pole if the customer is in good standing. Any customer not in good standing or not having services with Dothan Utilities will be subject to a minimum deposit of $150.

(11) A residential customer relocating to another residential service location can transfer the current utility cash deposit, if required, as follows:

f. The residential customer transferring service may be allowed service at multiple locations for up to 90 days. After 90 days, service at the "transfer from" address will be discontinued unless the customer has been granted temporary service status.
(12) Customers utilizing utility service for any purpose other than residential service, will be considered as a commercial customer.

(14) a. A form shall be completed to designate additional responsible party information. On the designation form the customer is giving written permission or the right for the designated party to obtain information, make agreements, transfer service, etc. on the account. By signing said form the designee is eligible for receipt of deposit posted in the customer's name and accepts the responsibility of the debt on said customer's account. Valid identification is required. A responsible party designated by this form cannot be removed until all outstanding debts are paid in full on said accounts.

  c. If the owner of the facility furnishes utilities under a lease agreement with a tenant, said owner shall remain responsible for such utility payment until changed with due notice. A copy of said lease is required for the utility account to be listed in the name of the lessor or owner of the facility.

  d. Commercial and industrial utilities shall be in the name of the corporation doing business. Provided "good standing" status, the deposit is transferable to a new location but not to new ownership. New ownership requires satisfaction of requirements as stated for a new commercial customer above. Commercial customers must satisfy all existing bad debt prior to initiation of service. Note: For a proprietorship or partnership, the responsibility remains with the owner as an individual.

  e. More than one family may be serviced through one metered service where separate wiring circuits and water pipe installations are not provided, upon special permission of the board of commissioners, finance director, utilities director or authorized representatives.

(15) It shall be the responsibility of the utility collection division to verify the credit of all residential applicants for utility service when applicable. If in their opinion the credit of the applicant warrants a deposit in excess of those stated in this section, the finance director, planning director or authorized representative shall have the authority to require the applicant to provide an adequate deposit, not to exceed $500.00 for residential customers, to protect the city's interest and mitigate risk.

The utility collection division reserves the right, after service has been established, to require deposits be provided by the customer and to increase the amount of any previous deposits to such amount as the finance director or authorized representative deems necessary to protect the city's interests and mitigate risk.

Sec. 102-34. - Bills; billing date, delinquent date and penalties.

(a) All bills for service rendered under this chapter are payable upon receipt and are subject to termination if not paid by the due date. If not fully paid by the due date, a fee of five percent shall be assessed on the outstanding bill.

  (1) The customer's base rate for solid waste service, vapor light service or fire line service for initial bills and final bills will be prorated for the number of days service was provided.

  (2) The delinquent fee shall be calculated by multiplying five percent times the unpaid balance.

  (3) The delinquent fee shall not be less than $5.00.

(b) Fees on Dothan utility payments may be waived by the finance director or authorized representative if there is a justifiable reason for the waiver.

(c) Upon application in the utility collection division, the delinquent fee can be permanently waived for any senior citizen 65 years of age or older if said individual is a responsible party on the account.
(d) A City of Dothan utility customer may be disconnected at the present location where service is provided for any unpaid debt incurred by the customer or a member of the customer's household either for the present location or for any previous location.

(e) If an unpaid account exists and the disconnected service has a balance due the city after the deposit has been applied toward the outstanding balance and the customer is unable to be located by all efforts, the account information will be remitted to a collection agency. Any and all fees (collection fees, legal fees, etc.) associated with the collections of amounts owed the City of Dothan will be the responsibility of any/all responsible parties on the account being collected.

(f) Extensions will only be granted to residential customers under the following circumstances:

(1) Extensions will only be granted to customers under legitimate hardship circumstances.

(2) Any customers desiring an extension shall make written application with the utility collection division prior to 4 pm on the business day prior to scheduled disconnection.

(3) No extension will be granted to a customer who has been extended three times in the preceding 12 months.

(4) No extension will be granted for amounts related to billed deposits.

(5) The city shall terminate utility service for nonpayment of utility charges for failure to adhere to an extension agreement. Termination will be made as soon as practicable without restriction as noted in (h) below.

(6) No customer will be allowed to obtain an extension unless all charged-off or bad debts (returned items) have been satisfied or a signed agreement has been established and payments on said agreement are current.

(g) Failure to pay delinquent bills by the cutoff date, shall be cause for disconnecting each and every service associated with an account.

(h) For postpay accounts, the city may terminate utility service for nonpayment of utility charges only during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No termination shall be permitted on a legal holiday or the day before a legal holiday. Utilities will not be terminated when freezing temperatures are expected or when the temperature is expected to be in excess of 100 degrees (Fahrenheit). This does not apply to terminations related to possible criminal offenses including but not limited to, termination related to returned items or disconnecting meters on inactive accounts registering consumption. This also does not apply to prepay accounts for residential customers. Prepay accounts will be scheduled for termination at such time as the prepay balance falls into a negative balance. Should the account be disconnected, receipt for the minimum payment will be required to generate an order for reconnection.

(i) No utility service that has been disconnected for nonpayment of bills and delinquent fees shall be reconnected or continued until all such bills and fees have been paid up to date (i.e. all delinquent bills). (If account is disconnected for nonpayment, the customer must pay with cash, money order, debit card, or credit card to reconnect). Upon a second disconnection for nonpayment, the customer may be subject to a deposit increase for each future disconnection. Deposit increase amounts will be payable at the time of reconnection.

(j) Failure to make payment will result in disconnection of service. Prior to reconnection, all unpaid bills must be paid in full.

(k) A connection fee is defined as a fee for connecting such utility service or expense incurred by the city related to connecting or disconnecting services. In the event multiple connections are required at the same location, the greatest single connection fee will be assessed, unless in units of 25 or more as described in subsection (3) below. See connection fee schedule:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service types</th>
<th>Normal work hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)</th>
<th>After hours Monday - Friday (4:01 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.)</th>
<th>Weekends &amp; holidays (8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard commercial</td>
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<td>Nonstandard Residential/Commercial</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
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*Orders for connection of service received in the Utility Collection Division or the Permits and Inspections Division after 12:00 p.m., that are requested to be worked on the same business day, shall be assessed at the after-hours rate. New service connections will only be available during normal work hours.

(1) Any customer who refuses a meter that can be operated via the Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) will have a manual meter installed. Said customer will be assessed a monthly charge in the amount of $25 for manually reading the meter in addition to the rates indicated in sections 102-61 through 102-138.

(2) It is preferred that a responsible party be present upon connection of utilities. If the electric service or water service indicates unsafe circumstances, such as a burnt lug or water leak, the service will remain disconnected until such time as a repair meeting City of Dothan standards has been made. If any subsequent trips are required, an additional connection fee will be assessed at the rate indicated in section 102-34(k).

(3) No connection fee will be assessed for commercial customers who have multiple rental properties as follows:
   a. The units must be rented or leased as residential units.
   b. The units must be owned or managed in the name of one company or responsible party.
   c. The units must be greater than 25 units which are connected or enclosed under the same roof or in uniform groups.
   d. The units are disconnected by the renter or lessee and are to be immediately transferred to the name of the managing company; thus, avoiding a second trip to connect service.
   e. The owner or responsible party will be charged a connection fee when a separate trip is incurred and a disconnection order for the renter or lessee is not simultaneously worked.
   f. The owner or responsible party must sign an agreement with conditions as follows:
      1. Allowing immediate transfer of disconnected service to be placed in the name of the managing company.
      2. Accepting responsibility for all bills upon disconnection of renter or lessee.
      3. Understanding that a connection fee will be assessed unless the disconnection was authorized by the renter or lessee.
      4. Understanding that rollover of service does not occur when a tenant’s service is disconnected for non-payment or failure to comply.

(l) In the event the customer’s physical health is determined to be subject to a life-threatening condition, as determined by a physician, which requires the use of artificial life support, on a 24-hour a day continuous basis to avoid loss of life that deems the patient as immobile, then such customer’s electrical service shall not be terminated. A certified practicing physician must confirm in writing the...
nature of life support and provide written confirmation that the medical condition conforms to this section of the City of Dothan Code of Ordinances. After such service has been confirmed by a physician as life threatening, a majority of the city commission or a responsible party on the account is required to terminate said service. Recertification of life support status will take place annually and be kept current by the utility collection division. It will be the responsibility of the customer to contact the respective physician and maintain current life-threatening statements. The account must be kept current or water service may be suspended. For all life-support accounts, an additional responsible party must sign with the account holder to be liable for incurred utility usage if the service remains in the patient's name.

(m) A fee of $20.00 shall be charged if a customer requests a reread of the utility meter. If the meter was initially read in error or found defective, this fee shall not apply and will be refunded in full to the customer. Unless a refund check is specified by the customer, this refund will be credited to the utility account.

(n) A fee of $25.00 shall be charged if a customer requests that a test be made of the utility meter. If the meter is found to be defective, this fee shall not apply and will be refunded in full to the customer as well as appropriate compensation for any overpayments. Unless a refund check is specified by the customer, this refund will be credited to the utility account.

(o) Returned items must be redeemed within 24 hours from the time of attempted notification (the next working day) by cash, cashier's check or money order. A credit card (not attached to a checking account) may be used for payment of a non-credit card returned item.

(p) Returned items resulting from credit card chargebacks must be redeemed within 24 hours from the time of attempted notification (the next working day) by cash, cashier's check or money order. Once a customer has a chargeback not resulting from a bank error, the customer will be prohibited from paying with a credit card for a period of at least one-year and the customer is deemed in good-standing per Section 102-32 (3) (b).

The following rules apply to all returned items received:

(1) Failure to redeem a returned item within 24 hours after attempted notification of receipt shall result in termination of utility service.

(2) A collection fee of $30.00, in addition to the face amount of the returned item, will be required unless there is a bank error involved. Proof of error is the responsibility of the customer to establish.

(3) A customer will only be allowed three returned items in a 12-month period from the most recent returned item. Once a customer has written three bad items to include returned credit card payments, the customer will be required to pay by cash, cashier's check, or money order until the 12-month time period expires on the most recent returned item. A credit card will be accepted to satisfy any returned item except in the event of a returned credit card payment. The customer is required to pay a $50.00 deposit increase at the time of the second returned item within the 12 month period if the customer does not meet the maximum deposit on account. If no deposit is on file for a utilities customer meeting section 102-32 at the time the first returned item is received, a deposit will be required meeting section 102-32 on the account provided there was no bank error.

(4) For utility payment returned items, notification will be delivered to the customer's residence or business stating the date and time payment in full is due to avoid cutoff. Any customer account having an online utility payment returned to Dothan Utilities as a fraudulent transaction will have the online utility bill payment option revoked and will not be allowed to pay with credit/debit card for a period of one-year and re-establishment of good-standing status.

(5) In the event the returned items are for a payment other than utility payment, each city department will be responsible for sending letters for collection of their respective department's returned items.
(6) It is the complete responsibility of the respective department that accepted the returned item from the issuer in good faith, to arrange for the collection of said returned items. A list of outstanding returned items will be sent periodically to all departments as a collection reminder.

(7) The utility collection division will retain the original returned items (or legal copies of said items). Upon payment of said returned item and applicable fees by the customer, the items will be returned to the customer or payee of the returned item, if requested. Any original returned item paid in full and not claimed by the customer will be destroyed.

(8) The utility collection division reserves the right to remit all uncollected returned items to a collection agency after one month of receipt or to the District Attorney's office after a certified letter has been sent in an effort to collect the returned item.

Sec. 102-35. - Budget billing.

(a) Budget billing is a leveled payment plan available to all residential utility customers. The payment amount is determined by calculating an average bill from the previous 12 months plus ten percent unless deemed otherwise by the finance director or authorized representative. When history is not available, the departments providing the services will be contacted to determine the monthly budget payment amount.

(b) Enrollment is not limited to one account per customer, but the applicant must meet requirements of multiple accounts per this Code. Customers must be in good-standing to be eligible for budget billing. The customer must be at a zero balance to begin budget billing.

(c) Reconciliation of budget billing accounts will be done in September of each year (except for discontinuance, see subsection (e), following) and a new monthly budget payment amount determined. At this time any deficit amount will be due or accumulated credit applied toward the new monthly budget payment until the credit is expended. Full settlement of the differences between actual usage amounts and budget payment amounts will be required if the customer is removed from budget billing prior to the reconciliation in September. A quarterly review of budget deficits will be performed by Utility Collections Staff. All customers with an account deficit over the amount of $100 will receive notification of the deficit and the updated budget payment amount.

(d) Delinquency fees for budget accounts will be based upon the calculated budget payment amount or unpaid balance, as further described in subsection 102-34(a) 2-3.

(e) Nonpayment of the monthly budget payment amount may be cause for a customer to be dropped from the budget billing program. Please refer to subsection 102-34(g) for additional criteria. Customers enrolled in this program may elect to be dropped at their convenience. However, if dropped, any balance due or credit will be reflected on the next bill. In addition, customers will not be eligible to re-enroll for six months.

Sec. 102-36. - Industrial development.

(a) As an incentive for industrial development the city may allow the potential industrial commercial customer to pay a surety bond for a deposit in the amount equivalent to four times the monthly average bill in lieu of the required cash deposit for commercial customers. The minimum commercial surety deposit would not be less than $1,000.00. This privilege shall be afforded to only new industrial customers.

Sec. 102-37. - Utility bill adjustments.

(a) Meter reading, billing and collection of utility bills is the responsibility of the finance department.

(b) (2) Meter rereads or meter tests may be performed when requested by the customer as the situation may require and upon collection of appropriate fees as specified in subsections 102-34 (l, m). For
meter re-reads requested by city staff that result in an approved water leak adjustment, the fee may be billed to the customer account at the time that the adjustment is processed.

(5) c. A sewer bill adjustment will only be made once in a 12 month period for the initial filling of a pool.

(c) (3) Billing adjustments for abnormal usage for water or sewage will only apply to the three most recent billing cycles if the leak was not completely resolved within three billing periods. Billing adjustments will only be made once consumption has returned to normal level as reflected by the first subsequent reading not including the leak. If first subsequent reading does not indicate normal consumption after reported date of repair, the billing adjustment will be denied.

(5) A customer may qualify for a leak adjustment only once in a five-year period. The five-year period begins the first month of the billing period following the billing period that the leak adjustment was applied. No leak adjustments will be made for irrigation systems or new construction for the first year. No leak adjustments will be made for automatic pool filler valves on water or irrigation meters.

(7) Property Management Companies may have more than one water leak adjustment under the primary account (Customer ID) but are still subject to restriction of one adjustment per location (Location ID) in a five year period.

Section 4. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article II, Electric Service, Division 1, Generally, Section 39, Prepayment for Service, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby added in its entirety to read as follows:

Sec.102-39. – Prepayment for Service

(a) If available at service location, utility customers will have the option to prepay utility services. Customers will be required to complete the application for service with proper documentation as required per the provisions in Sec. 102-31 to initiate the service. The prepay option is only allowed for those customers that have an automated disconnect electric meter at the location of service. Accounts with active prepay service will not be required to maintain a utility deposit with the City of Dothan. However, in order to initiate prepay service, a minimum beginning balance of $50 will be required. In addition, any outstanding returned item(s) must be paid in full. A monthly fee of $5.00 will be assessed to each prepay account to cover the costs associated specifically to the prepay service.

(b) Charges reflected on accounts utilizing the prepay module for metered services are added daily based on the usage from the previous day. Flat rates and/or base charges are prorated daily based on a 30 day month. Any adjustments, credit, etc… will be reflected as entered on a daily basis. Customers who opt for prepay utilities will not be subject to delinquent fees and will not receive a monthly billing statement. Any adjustment to the account of record for a prepay customer will be reflected upon the next reconciliation of the account. Reconciliation of the prepay module to the account of record will occur monthly on the bill date. Approval of said reconciliation will create an adjustment (if applicable) in the prepay module to reflect the reconciled balance.

(c) Any payments on prepay accounts that are returned from a financial institution will be subject to collection per the provisions in Sec. 102-34(o). No extensions will be granted for a customer utilizing prepay service. No holds will be placed on prepay customer accounts for vouchers or assistance checks. Monies will be considered received upon receipt by the Utility Collections Office.

(d) Prepay customers are subject to disconnection at any point in time after the prepay account balance becomes negative. In order to reactivate the service, the customer will be required to pay the negative
balance, a connection fee of $25 and obtain a minimum balance of $25. Exclusions to disconnection such as weekends, holidays and temperature DO NOT apply to the prepay customer.

(e) The Utility Collections Division of the Finance Department may elect to use deposit monies and/or debt recovery when converting customers to prepay. Twenty-five percent (25%) of every payment made will be applied to the debt recovery balance until such time as the debt is paid in full. Any customer with an "old" debt owed to Dothan Utilities may have that debt transferred to the account of record and added to debt recovery in the prepay module as a means of collection. If the prepay account is terminated, any remaining balance in debt recovery will be due immediately. If not paid, the debt remaining will be subject to the same collection procedures as non prepay accounts.

(f) If a customer elects to be removed from prepay, he/she may do so. No deposit will be required during the first year provided the customer maintains "good standing" status. Loss of "good standing" status may result in the customer being required to establish a deposit as set forth in Sec. 102-32.

Section 5. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article II, Electric Service, Division 2, Rates, Section 69, Miscellaneous Services, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby partially amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102-69. - Miscellaneous services.

(b) (3) Any senior citizen 65 years of age or older, and who is a responsible party on the utility account shall pay a monthly base rate for a 100-watt HPS overhead security light of $5.00 per month instead of $9.00, and for an underground security light a monthly base rate of $6.00 instead of $10.00. Any customer from age 60 – 65 who has previously established the discount with the utility collections division will be grandfathered in to retain eligibility for the discount.

Section 6. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article III, Water Service, Division 2, Rates, Charges and Billing, Section 137, Senior Citizen Discount on Water Usage, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102-137. - Senior citizen discount on water usage.

Senior citizens over the age of 65 that use 5,000 gallons of water per month or less will receive a $2.00 reduction in their monthly water bill after completion of the required documentation in the finance department, Dothan Utilities Collections Division. This applies to single unit residential dwellings with individual water meters, as well as, residential irrigation meters. If the customer has multiple active properties, senior discount may only be applied to the customer’s primary residence.

Section 7. That Chapter 102, Utilities, Article IV, Sewer Service, Division 4, Fees and Charges, Section 336, Senior Citizen Discount on Sewage, of the Code of Ordinances is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 102-336. - Senior citizen discount on sewage.

Senior citizens who have reached the age of 65 whose sole source of income is Social Security Benefits and that discharge 3,000 gallons of sewage per month or less will receive a $2.00 reduction in their monthly sewer bill after completion of the required documentation and approval by the finance department. This applies to single unit residential dwellings with individual water meters and will be based upon the metered water consumption at the customer’s location. If the customer has multiple active properties, senior discount may only be applied to the customer’s primary residence.

Section 8. After publication as required by law, this Ordinance shall become effective immediately.

PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED ON November 19, 2019.

Attest:

Tammy Danner
City Clerk

Mayor

Associate Commissioner District 1

J. L. Fleming
Associate Commissioner District 2

Associate Commissioner District 3

Associate Commissioner District 4

Associate Commissioner District 5

Associate Commissioner District 6

BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS

I, hereby certify that the above Ordinance was published in THE DOTHAN EAGLE, a newspaper of general circulation and published in the City of Dothan, Alabama on November 22, 2019.

Tammy Danner
City Clerk