

To: President and Members of the Munster Town Council

From: Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer *W Mis*

Date: May 18, 2020

Re: Ordinance 1797: Waiver of Late Fees

At the April 20, 2020 meeting, Council adopted the COVID-19 Policy. The policy states that, when necessary, the Council would be asked to take appropriate legislative action.

With the economic impact of the pandemic, the Clerk-Treasurer anticipates increased water bill delinquencies. It is believed the economic impact will continue past the time the economy is "re-opened." The current *Utility Billing Policies, Rules & Regulations* (updated August 8, 2018) allows the waiver of late fees if the customer has had no late fees for the previous twelve months or if the customer signs up for automatic payments from their bank account.

In an effort to support our residents who are most hurt by the economic downturn, we recommend allowing a waiver of late fees for those customers who make a request in writing to the Water Billing Department in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office. In practice, customers who call requesting a waiver are sent an email. The customer then needs to reply to the email confirming the request.

The relief period will begin with the bills due April 20, 2020 and end with the bills due January 20, 2021. This covers the bills issued when the stay at home order first went into effect through bills with usage through December 15, 2020.

Executive Order 20-05 prohibits a water utility from shutting off service for non-payment. The Order does not address late fees or penalties.

Ordinance 1797 has been prepared to authorize this relief.

Recommended action:

By motion and roll call vote, hear Ordinance 1797 on first reading as presented and schedule second reading for June 1, 2020.