

To: President and Members of the Munster Town Council
From: Wendy Mis, Clerk-Treasurer
Date: March 15, 2021
Re: Paperless Billing and Online Payments for Water Utility Bills

With the onset of Covid, Staff wanted to provide as many touchless payment options to customers as possible. At the July 6, 2020 meeting, Council approved an agreement to allow recurring payment of water bills by credit card through the Town's website. The agreement also allowed customers to have paperless billing. Both of these features were requested by numerous residents for several years. The program went live in November 2020 and the payment portion has been mildly successful. There have been several issues with the paperless billing and occasional problems with the payment processing.

The Town is currently working on the transition to BS&A, the new financial software. BS&A has two preferred providers for online bill payments and paperless billing; neither is our current provider. Staff spoke with both of the preferred providers and believes that Invoice Cloud is the better option.

Invoice Cloud has a proven, easy to use platform to allow our customers to create an account, set up recurring payments with emailed receipts, electronic bills, text or email reminders, and two years of billing and payment history. In addition, we will be able to include a link to the News You Can Use for those choosing paperless billing.

There is no set up fee for the Town and no new hardware needs. Invoice Cloud and BS&S have worked together on numerous implementations like Munster. The company is PCCI Level 1 compliant, and no credit card information is stored on any Town device.

There is a \$50.00 monthly fee to maintain the customer and biller portals plus a .30¢/paperless bill/billing cycle fee. Staff estimates the cost to send a paper bill is .68¢ broken down as follows.

Postage	\$0.3972
Paper, mailing and return envelopes	\$0.0700
Printing costs	\$0.1330
News You Can Use	<u>\$0.0860</u>
Total	\$0.6862/paper bill

If 20% of our customers enroll in paperless billing, the annual cost would be \$5,976 as compared to \$13,669 to send via U.S. mail. All Town costs will be paid from the Water Cash Operating Fund 601.

Staff recommends adopting a convenience fee model which would be \$2.75/transaction for transactions \$200.00 or less paid by the customer. The credit card fees paid by the Town currently exceed \$35,000/year. Customers have stated they are willing to pay a convenience fee for the service. Other methods of payment that are free to the customer are offered and will remain in place.

Recommendation:

By motion and voice vote, the agreement with Invoice Cloud for online payment of water utility bills and paperless billing.