

ORDINANCE NO. 1443

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR,
WASHINGTON, AMENDING UTILITY SERVICE CHARGES
IMPOSED UNDER GHMC TITLE 13 FOR A LIMITED
DURATION; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND
PROVIDING FOR AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, GHMC Title 13 establishes water utility service charges as well as sewer utility service charges for all customers which connect to the City's water and sewer utilities; and

WHEREAS, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and its rapid progression in Washington state and throughout the United States continues to threaten life and health of people as well as the economy; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, United States Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public emergency for COVID-19 beginning January 27, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee proclaimed a State of Emergency in Washington state due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a proclamation closing restaurants, bars, entertainment and recreation venues, and certain service businesses in order to promote social distancing and self-isolation and thereby slow the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, Kit Kuhn, as Mayor of the City of Gig Harbor, issued a proclamation declaring that a civil emergency exists in the City due to the outbreak of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 23rd, 2020 Governor Inslee issued Proclamation 20-25 – Stay Home, Stay Healthy. Among the requirements of this proclamation the Governor mandated that “all people in Washington State shall immediately cease leaving their home or place of residence except: (1) to conduct or participate in essential activities, and/or (2) for employment in essential business services;” and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 outbreak and associated mandated limitations on individuals’ ability to work and businesses abilities to operate have created serious economic impacts on the residents and businesses of Gig Harbor which in turn severely limit their ability to pay basic essential utilities; and

WHEREAS, the Gig Harbor City Council finds that it is necessary to take action to ensure that residents and businesses can afford water and sewer utility services during this time when they are forced to not work and stay home to combat the outbreak; and

WHEREAS, the Gig Harbor City Council finds that a reduction in water and sewer utility fees for all non-governmental accounts for a limited period of time will directly protect and promote the public health and welfare of the residents of Gig Harbor during a period of time where those residents are particularly vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, the City's prudent fiscal management of the utility has resulted in the City's high AA+ bond rating which in turn resulted in lower borrowing costs, therefore, the City is in the position to offer some short-term rate relief to customers; and

WHEREAS, the Gig Harbor city Council finds that the water and sewer utility is in a strong financial position to cover ongoing operations into the foreseeable without a major negative impact on the City's bond rating; NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Water Utility Service Charges Amended for Limited Duration.

The Customer Base Charges for water service outlined in GHMC 13.04.010(F) are hereby eliminated for all Residential, Multi-Residential, and Commercial utility accounts for the duration identified in Section 5 below. This change does not impact any governmental utility account.

Section 2. Water Utility Service Charges for Nonmetered Residential Uses Amended for Limited Duration. The Monthly Water Service Charge for unmetered Residential and Multiple Residential Building utility accounts outlined in GHMC 13.04.020(F) is hereby eliminated for the duration identified in Section 5 below.

Section 3. Sewer Utility Service Charges Amended for Limited Duration. The Customer Base Charges for sewer service outlined in GHMC 13.32.010(F) are hereby eliminated for all Residential, Multifamily Residential and Commercial utility accounts for the duration identified in Section 5 below. This change does not impact any governmental utility account.

Section 4. Sewer Utility Service Charges for Nonmetered Uses Amended for Limited Duration. The Monthly Service Charge for Nonmetered Residential, Multifamily Residential, and Commercial utility accounts outlined in GHMC 13.32.020(F) are hereby eliminated for the duration identified in Section 5 below.

Section 5. Duration of Suspension. Each active City utility customer shall receive the benefit of the rate reductions outlined in Sections 1 through 4 above for one (1) two-month billing cycle between the months of March and May 2020. This means that a utility customer will receive the rate reduction either on the March/April invoice or on the April/May invoice depending on the customer's billing cycle. No customer shall receive the identified rate reductions on more than one (1) invoice and customers must remain on their regular billing cycle. Any and all utility service charges included on any other shall be charged at the previously established utility service charge rates without amendment or modification.

Section 6. Declaration of Emergency – Immediate Effective Date. For the reasons set forth in this ordinance and in the emergency proclamations of Governor Inslee, Pierce County Executive Dammeier, Mayor Kuhn, and President Trump, the Gig Harbor City Council finds and declares that a public emergency exists due to the outbreak of COVID-19 that makes this ordinance necessary for the immediate protection of the public health, public safety, public property, and public welfare. This ordinance, having been declared an emergency and having received the affirmative votes of at least a majority plus one of the whole membership of the Gig Harbor City Council, is not subject to referendum and shall become effective immediately upon adoption. The City Clerk shall publish this ordinance or a summary thereof in the ordinary course of business.

Passed by the City Council of the City of Gig Harbor, the 13th day of April,
2020.

Approved by the Mayor of the City of Gig Harbor, the 13th day of April,
2020.



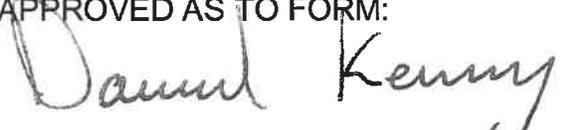
KIT KUHN, MAYOR

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:



MOLLY TOWSLEE, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



DANIEL P. KENNY, CITY ATTORNEY

PUBLISHED: 04/23/20
EFFECTIVE DATE: 04/13/20
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