

**City Council**  
Ed L. Hatley, Mayor  
Martin A. Eaddy, Mayor Pro Tem  
Mary Francis White  
Roby Jetton  
Jim Watson



**City Manager**  
Steve Zickefoose, MBA  
[szickefoose@lincolntonnc.org](mailto:szickefoose@lincolntonnc.org)  
**CITY CLERK**  
Daphne Ingram  
[daphneingram@ci.lincolnton.nc.us](mailto:daphneingram@ci.lincolnton.nc.us)  
**CITY ATTORNEY**  
Thomas J. Wilson, Jr.

**For Immediate Release**

August 6, 2020

Contact: Laura Morris  
[LMorris@LincolntonNC.org](mailto:LMorris@LincolntonNC.org)

**City Utility Billing Update**

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, the City of Lincolnton has been working hard to support residents and utility customers. Residential utility disconnections for outstanding utility bill payments have been suspended since April 1 and the city has not disconnected any residential water, wastewater, and/or electric service due to late or non-payment through July 29. In addition, all penalties including late and default fees between April 1 and July 29 have been permanently waived.

NC Executive Order 142 expired on July 29, and normal utility billing practices have resumed. It is important for City of Lincolnton utility customers to know that they are still responsible for paying for all utility usage billed between April 1 and July 29, which includes bills with due dates in the months of April, May, June, and July.

Any customers with accumulated balances that were due between April 1 and July 29 and are struggling to pay their utility bills are urged to contact the City of Lincolnton Utility Billing office as soon as possible (704-736-8980). Customers with delinquent accounts must make payment plan arrangements before the August 20 payment due date; any accounts that do not have a payment plan in place and are not paid in full by August 20th will be subject to disconnection.

Lincolnton Covid-19 Payment Plan participants will have 6 months to pay outstanding balances due as of July 29 in six (6) equal installments between August 2020 – January 2021. The payment plan is simple:

- All customers must opt in to participate in the Payment Plan and sign the payment plan agreement. Call the Utility Billing office for details: 704-736-8980. Without a signed payment plan, services are subject to disconnection.
- All outstanding balances will be divided into 6 equal monthly payments due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month in August, September, October, November, December, and January 2021.
- Customers must pay the total current month billing PLUS the Payment Plan amount to avoid disconnections.

In its continuing efforts to assist utility customers with genuine hardships, the city continues to actively pursue grant and relief funds to help residents pay overdue utility bills. If any grant funds are received, they will be dispersed according to customers' ongoing efforts to pay their bills on time, including past partial payments and meeting payment plan obligations.

**City Council**  
Ed L. Hatley, Mayor  
Martin A. Eaddy, Mayor Pro Tem  
Mary Francis White  
Roby Jetton  
Jim Watson



**City Manager**  
Steve Zickefoose, MBA  
[szickefoose@lincolntonnc.org](mailto:szickefoose@lincolntonnc.org)  
**CITY CLERK**  
Daphne Ingram  
[daphneingram@ci.lincolnton.nc.us](mailto:daphneingram@ci.lincolnton.nc.us)  
**CITY ATTORNEY**  
Thomas J. Wilson, Jr.

August 5, 2020; page 2

In addition, all city utility customers are encouraged to use the online payment system, and online convenience fees are currently waived. The city has recently launched new utility billing software and all customers must set-up their new online account access using the NEW utility billing account number found on the July billing statements. See the [Utility Billing](#) webpage on the city website for more details on the new online payment system.

The city faces significant budget shortfalls due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to increased costs for safety precautions and sanitizing, the utility billing department reports that there are currently 555 past due residential billing accounts, triple the number in July 2019. These delinquent accounts owe \$425,000 for past usage and \$127,000 in late/default fees that have been waived. This \$550,000 deficit equals approximately 4% of the city's annual water and electric fund revenues, or about a 6.5% rate increase for paying customers.

The city continues to work hard to deliver essential services for all citizens despite this budget impact and has already used reserve funds to balance the city budget. City services are operating as regularly scheduled and employees are taking precautions to protect themselves and the community as appropriate. Additional information regarding ongoing Phase 2 operations:

- Parks & Recreation Department:
  - Parks & Trail restrooms are now open with limited capacity
  - Outdoor pickleball, tennis, and basketball courts at BGRoss Park are open with capacity & other restrictions.
  - The Lentz Recreation Center pool, indoor gym, and indoor racquetball courts remain closed.
  - Playgrounds, First Federal Park Splashpad, remain closed until Phase 3.
  - Check the [Lincolnton Parks & Recreation website](#) for the most current details.
- The Water Resources Department asks that you do NOT flush wipes, paper towels or other items in toilets. Only flush toilet paper to help protect our wastewater pipes and pumps.
- The Public Works Department reminds residents that this Friday, August 7, is First Friday Recycling. Roll all blue recycling bins to the curb on Thursday evening for recycling collection on Friday morning. Yard waste is being collected on a rolling basis.

The NC Phase 2 "Safer at Home" EO155 advisory is in effect until Friday, September 11. Residents are reminded to take appropriate precautions and use the 3W's – **Wear** a mask, **Wait** 6' apart, and **Wash** your hands regularly. The order also bans gatherings to less than 10 people indoors and less than 25 people outdoors. Everyone should practice responsible social distancing. Additional guidance and resources are available on the city website at [www.LincolntonNC.org/Covid](http://www.LincolntonNC.org/Covid).

# # #