



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Public Utility Board
Bill Fosbre, City Attorney
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance – Amending Chapter 12.01 of the Municipal Code relating to utility fees during the current declared state of emergency – July 18, 2017
DATE: July 13, 2017

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance amending Chapter 12.01 of the Municipal Code related to waiving power and water utility connection and inspection fees for cities in Tacoma Power and Water’s service territories during the current declared state of emergency (set to expire October 9, 2017), and declaring an emergency, making necessary the passage of this ordinance and it becoming effective immediately.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.

BACKGROUND:

On May 2, 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 39716, directing the City Manager to prepare an Emergency Temporary Aid and Shelter Program to respond to the homelessness crisis. At the City Council meeting on May 9, 2017, the City Council passed Ordinance No. 28430 declaring a state of public health emergency relating to the conditions of homeless encampments located in the City. The City Manager proposed a three-phase Emergency Temporary Aid and Shelter Program to respond the homeless crisis and emergent conditions endangering the public health, safety and welfare, consisting of mitigation of the conditions, providing emergency sheltering and transition services, and providing long-term housing. The temporary emergency shelter sites provide needed community services in response to the declared public health emergency, and pursuant to RCW 35.92.380 the City may authorize the waiver of connection fees, hook-up fees, or other charges for low-income persons to use the City’s utility services. The Public Utility Board, at its meeting on July 12, 2017, adopted Resolution No. U-10942, with the belief that it is in the best interests of the utility rate payers and community at large to provide for utility services for the poor and infirm during the current declared state of emergency.

ISSUE:

Section 4.11 of the Tacoma City Charter requires all matters related to the fixing of rates and charges for utility services to be initiated by the Board, and approved by the City Council.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could choose to not waive connection fees, hook-up fees, or other charges pursuant to RCW 35.92.390.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Utility Board recommends waiving connection fees, hook-up fees, or other charges for utility services for the poor and infirm during the current declared state of emergency during the current declared state of emergency (set to expire October 9, 2017).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Director of Public Utilities shall submit to the Public Utility Board a report listing the number and amount of connection and inspection fees waived.