

# **Pontiac Water Affordability Coalition**

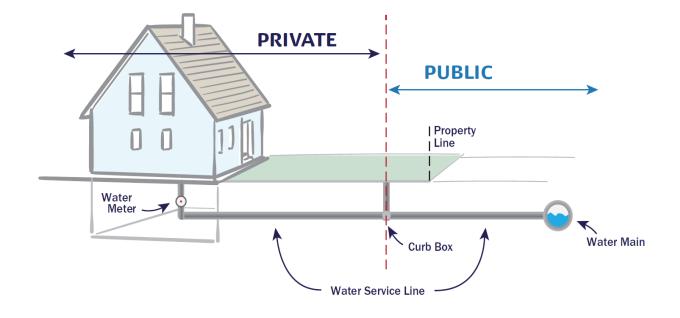
April 20, 2021



### **Water Affordability Has Three Basic Components**



- The cost to maintain, repair, and improve infrastructure
- The cost of purchasing and transporting clean water through infrastructure to Pontiac residents
- Individual water use



### **Individual Conservation Efforts**



- Customer education is important for effective water use
  - Understanding how water is measured
  - Understanding how water is billed
  - Discovering ways to monitor and reduce use
- Individual water use can make a big difference in monthly water bills
  - A faucet dripping at one drip per second can waste more than
     3,000 gallons per year
  - Many leaks can be much more severe





## **Understanding The Water Meter and Water Usage**



#### **Water Meters 101**

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER

- In Pontiac, WRC has installed Neptune digital meters
- Most homes now have 5/8" or 1" meters as shown here
- Pointing (and holding) a flashlight at the solar panel activates the LCD display
- The LCD display has an informational panel that shows important pieces of information including:
  - Current read
  - Leak detection
  - Flow rate
  - Water use indicator (the arrow appears when water is being used)
- These are tools that customers can use to monitor water use

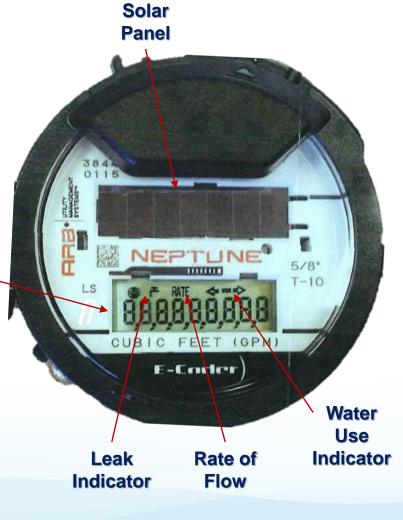


Display Panel

#### **Water Meters 101**

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER

- Numbers on the display will alternate between the current meter read and the Rate of Flow
  - The meter read is a cumulative total of all water used since installation.
  - The meter measures in cubic feet and a snapshot of the read is captured monthly for billing
  - It is the first four digits from left to right
  - The Rate of Flow is the average flow rate (gallons per minute) displayed every 12 seconds
- The Leak Indicator is the faucet image
  - If no faucet image is shown, there is *currently* no leak
  - A flashing faucet image could be a sign of an intermittent leak—water has been used for at least 12 hours in the last 24 hours
  - A constant faucet image indicates a strong possibility that there is a leak water has been used every hour in the last 24 hours



Display

**Panel** 

#### Is There a Leak?

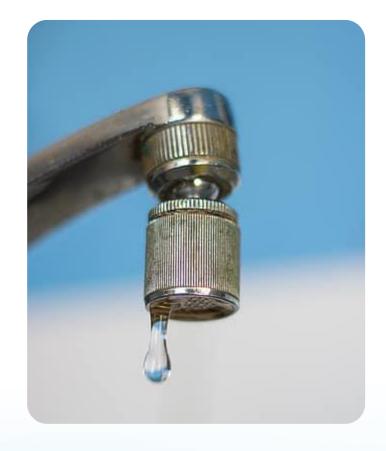


- Monitor the meter
  - Over a period when there is no expected use, ensure all water sources are off (sinks, washers, outside hoses, etc.) and toilets are not flushed. Note the meter read using <u>all</u> the digits on the LCD display.
  - After a few hours, check the meter again. If no water was used but the meter shows usage, there may be a leak.
  - Note that some humidifiers may use a small amount of water impacting the reading.
- Test the toilet
  - Toilet leaks are very common and in many instances they are silent.
  - To confirm a toilet leak, drop liquid food coloring or colored drink mix in the toilet tank.
  - If the color bleeds into the bowl within 15-20 minutes, without flushing, there is a leak.
  - The most common cause is an easy to replace flapper.

### **Additional Ways To Identify Common Leaks**



- Inside the home
  - Dripping sink, shower, and tub faucets
  - Water on floor in basement utility rooms, near water tanks, laundry tubs, and humidifiers
- Outside
  - Hose spigots left on or not winterized
  - Wet spots in the yard due to underground irrigation problems



### **Repairing Leaks**



- Awareness and easy maintenance can save customers money
  - Self-installed toilet flappers
  - Replacing washers and gaskets on indoor and outdoor faucets
- Some repairs may have a greater cost, but there are ways to curb future use
  - If you are replacing a faucet or a showerhead, look for one that has earned the WaterSense label
  - Contact OLHSA to qualify for WRAP, which can assist with minor plumbing repairs
- Visit the EPA website for more information on leaks: <u>www3.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/fixleak.html</u>



# **Understanding The Water Bill**



#### **How Bills Are Created**

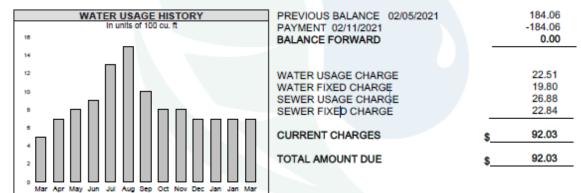


- Each month, data from meters is collected and reads are entered into the billing system
- The system calculates the volume of water used since the last read and calculates the bill based on the rate structure
- Helpful and important information is located on both sides of the bill, including
  - Information on leaks
  - How to read the meter

### Water Bill Example – Calculating Water Volume



Read	Dates	Billing	Meter R	eadings				
Previous	Present	Days	Previous	Present	Code	Multiplier	Usage	Units
01/30/2021	03/01/2021	30	0322	0329	MR	1	7	100 CU.FT.
				1	່		2	
\ \					\ <b>~</b> ,		( )	4 /
	Previous		Previous Present Days	Previous Present Days Previous	Previous Present Days Previous Present	Previous         Present         Days         Previous         Present         Code           01/30/2021         03/01/2021         30         0322         0329         MR	Previous         Present         Days         Previous         Present         Code         Multiplier           01/30/2021         03/01/2021         30         0322         0329         MR         1	Previous         Present         Days         Previous         Present         Code         Multiplier         Usage           01/30/2021         03/01/2021         30         0322         0329         MR         1         7



PON Amount Due	nt Type TIAC Due Date	03/05/2021 Late Payment	WRC	
\$92.03	04/01/2021	\$101.23	A MILC	db (0.40) 0.00 1110
	Message	s	WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER Jim Nash	For Billing Inquiries: [248] 858-1110 Pay Bills Online at: www.oakgov.com/watar Pay in person at: 2636 Dixio Hwy., Waterford, MI

- 1. **Meter Readings:** This is where the first four digits reading left to right on your meter appear.
- 2. Code: Explained on the reverse side of the bill.
  - MR = Actual meter read
  - ME or CE = The use was estimated because your meter could not be read
- **3. Usage:** This is the difference between the monthly meter readings for the read dates shown.
- Units: Meters measure in hundreds of cubic feet.

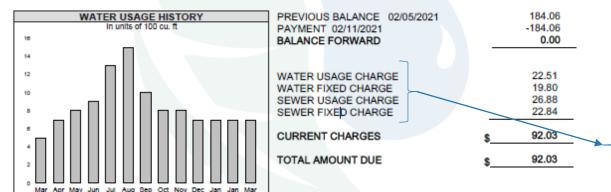
On this example bill, the customer used 7 units of water which is 700 cubic feet. For perspective, translated to gallons, the amount used is:

700 cu ft. x 7.481(gallons/cu ft.) = 5,236 gallons

### **Example Water Bill – Applying Volume to Rates**



	Read Dates		Billing	Meter Readings		lling Meter Readings					
Meter Number	Previous	Present	Days	Previous	Present	Code	Multiplier	Usage	Units		
0036536696	01/30/2021	03/01/2021	30	0322	0329	MR	1	7	100 CU.FT.		



			Bill Date	nt Type	
			03/05/2021	TIAC	PON
		WRC	Late Payment	Due Date	Amount Due
12401 050 1110	For Billing Inquiries: (248) 8	ANIC	\$101.23	04/01/2021	\$92.03
	Pay Bills Online at: www.oak	WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER Jim Nash	s	Message	

**Water Usage Charge:** This is where the volume calculated above is applied to the rates. This amount varies with monthly use and covers the cost of water.

**Water Fixed Charge:** These are the charges to cover system maintenance and operations. This charge is for all customers who have water service on at the street.

**Sewer Usage Charge:** This is based on the volume of water used as applied to the sewer rates. This amount varies with use and covers the cost of treating wastewater.

**Sewer Fixed Charge:** these are the charge to cover system maintenance and operations. This charge is for all customers who have water service.

### **Example Water Bill - Reverse**





WATER RESOURCES COMMISSIONER

We accept E-Checks, Visa, Mastercard, and Discover (debit or credit). You can also participate in our Convenient Ways to Pay Without Service Fees! automatic withdrawal service using your checking or savings account. For an application form, go to Pay online at <u>www.oakgov.com/water</u>.

- Pay by check using the enclosed return envelope.
- Pay in person at 2636 Dixie Hwy., Waterford, MI. Our hours are Monday--Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. By phone at 248-858-1110 during business hours or 24/7 using the self-service option.

Payments must be received by the due date to avoid penalty. Postmarks will not be honored.

please follow the payment schedule on your arrangement letter. If you are in a payment arrangement,

For emergency service on holidays, weekends and nights call (248) 624-6366

# Important Information Regarding Your Bill

- Meter reads with the code MR are actual meter reads.
- Meter reads with codes ME or CE are estimates. If you are receiving estimates, please contact our office. • When contacting the billing office regarding the consumption on your bill, please have your current meter when contacting the outing once regarding the consumption on your out, picase nave your current meter reading available. The meter reads from left to right. Please provide all digits on your meter. If you live in a
- A remote reading device, typically located on the outside of the home, is wired to the meter and provides meter Water and sewer billing rates are available at the billing office and online.
- 100 cubic feet equals approximately 750 gallons.

# Even the smallest of leaks can increase your water consumption!

High consumption on your water bill may be an indication that you have a leak somewhere within your plumbing. While toilets are one of the most common water wasters, they tend to be less noticeable your pulming, while tonets are one of the most common water wasters, they tend to be less nonceable than a leaky faucet. Although running water may not be seen or heard your toilet still could be leaking.

To test for a leak, put some food coloring in the tank. Do not flush. Wait for 10 to 20 minutes. If To test for a least, put some rood coloring in the tank. Do not husn, wan for it to 20 ninhutes. If the food coloring appears in the bowl, your tollet is leaking. The leak probably is located around the plunger ball or flapper valve at the bottom of the tank. You can save hundreds of dollars the pumger ban or mapper varve at the pottom of the tank. Tou can save numbered of domain annually on water bills by simply making sure leaks are dealt with immediately. Not only will you



The reverse side of the bill provides customers with:

- How to pay bills
- **Emergency information**
- How to read the bill
- Impacts of leaks and toilet leak detection
- Customer service representatives are available to walk customers through their bills and answer questions



### **Questions / Open Discussion**



### **Next Meeting**



- Topic: Water and Sewer Rates
  - What makes up my rate?
  - How do you calculate the rate?
  - **Current Pontiac Rates**
  - Why is my bill so high?
- Meeting: May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10 a.m.
  - Going forward, we are working to setup a reoccurring meeting to be on the third Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m.

### Thank you!



#### Jim Nash

Water Resources Commissioner 248-842-6185 nashj@oakgov.com

#### **Kelsey Cooke**

Attorney & Special Projects Manager 248-296-1406 cookek@oakgov.com

#### **WRC Billing & Customer Service**

248-858-1110 wrcbilling@oakgov.com

#### Trisha Bruzek

Marketing & Communications Supervisor 248-494-6826 bruzekp@oakgov.com

#### **Julia Ruffin**

Community Liaison 248-791-4367 ruffinj@oakgov.com

