

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****June 2, 2020**

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**SUBJECT: ONLINE BILL PAY AND PAYMENT PROCESSING
ENHANCEMENTS**

On June 15, 2020, Fort Worth Water customers will see a change in the City's online bill payment presence, as the City works to provide faster, more secure, and cost-effective payment processing and begins the process of launching new features and enhanced digital engagement tools for our customers.

In 2019, the City of Fort Worth executed a contract with Paymentus to process all electronic forms of payment and host an online payment platform. The Utility had been previously notified by its billing system provider, Central Square that it would phase out its existing transaction manager solution for its customers. That required the City to identify another solution that could be integrated into the Central Square billing system. The Utility determined that the Paymentus transaction manager best fulfilled future growth needs to provide enhanced payment processing services for utility customers. That transition will be complete June 15th. This change eliminates use of the Click2Gov platform known as H2Online that has been operational since 2002.

Paymentus will allow for real-time payment processing and will also streamline daily reconciliation by eliminating end of day batch settlements, promoting timely revenue postings to the General Ledger. Financial reporting will be simplified and will enable more efficient partnering with one vendor instead of the five currently used. In addition, Paymentus provides a fully-hosted reliable platform that meets all Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance standards to address PCI security concerns.

For security reasons, all customers must establish a new online account. Customers who currently use auto-pay and bank draft will be required to reset those payment options. Information of the pending change has been provided through bill messages and updated website information. The May bill includes a message that informs customers of specific actions required and calls attention to the change through messaging on the billing envelope. Emails will be sent to auto-pay and e-Notification customers. An individual mailer will be sent out to every commercial and residential accountholder. Additional outreach activities include use of City News, social media platforms, including NextDoor, and neighborhood bulletins.

The transition to Paymentus represents the first phase of improvements to the online customer experience. Paymentus will provide some immediate enhancements, such as the ability to view a PDF of the bill, a feature that is not available through the Clic2Gov platform. A Spanish-language payment website will also rolled out in the coming months for customers who are fluent in Spanish but not English. Additional features will be rolled out through the course of 2020 and 2021.

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The launch of the MYH2O portal will provide for phase II enhancements later this fall. The new portal will include a full-service mobile solution with the following functionality:

- Ability to request move in, move out services and transfer service;
- Detailed interval water use data for accounts with AMI meters, offering multiple viewing options, including cost detail and options for comparison to prior use and usage of other customers by neighborhood or zip code;
- Smart iQ Analytics and alerts allowing the customer to identify leakage, high use, and watering violations, and providing home water reports.
- Conservation tab providing educational information and enabling the user to view and enroll in conservation-based programs;
- Ability to set notification preferences using a variety of mediums;
- Enrollment in paperless billing;
- Ability to set budget alerts that notify the customer if certain percentage cost thresholds have been met; and
- Ability to electronically submit any billing related concerns. .

Phase III will enable field service appointment scheduling, additional payment scheduling and due date options, outage notifications, custom forms, and web chat capabilities.

Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please contact Chris Harder, Water Director at 817-392-8207 or Kara Shuror, Deputy Water Director at 817-392-8819.

David Cooke
City Manager