

Date Adopted May 23, 2016Date Amended: March 2, 2017**POLICY FOR UTILITY BILLING AND PAYMENT PROCESS**

An initial monthly bill covering approximately thirty (30) days of water bill usage (please note that the 30 period may vary due to equipment or staff availability) is sent out to each customer on a monthly cycle and is due twenty-five (25) days after the billing date (as posted on the bill). If this bill goes unpaid, upon the due date, a 5% penalty is added to the past due balance when the next bill is prepared in the billing cycle. An account showing a previous balance due shall be stamped in red-ink *"Past Due! Please pay past due balance by (\_\_\_\_ date) to avoid your service from being disconnected."*

If the past due amount shown on the bill remains unpaid at the close of business (5:00 pm) on the day following the next due date, then on the following business day the City staff shall begin the process to issue a Public Notice of Disconnect (PND).

A PND represents a final 72 hour notice before service may be disconnected.

If, prior to the initiation of the PND, a payment is made in full for the amount past due, then the PND will not be initiated.

If the bill is paid within 72 hours of posting the PND, service will not be disconnected. If payment is not made in 72 hours, service will be disconnected. To restore service, the utility bill balance must be paid in full, including late charges, and the appropriate seasonal delinquent turn on/turn off fee. After disconnect, payments must be made with cash, a money order or by credit card. Personal checks are not accepted once the service has been disconnected.

If a customer is unable to pay the utility bill in full they may fill out an Application for Temporary Extension to receive up to two weeks of relief or an Application of Hardship for an extension up to two months of relief before payment in full is required. Either application can be found online, picked up in person at City Hall or mailed upon request. The applications are to be filled out completely, signed, and returned in person to the Utility Billing Department. Application for Hardship Extension can only be filed once annually per address per customer. Application for Temporary Extension may be filed more than once per year per customer; however, after the first application, a \$20.00 processing fee must be paid with each application that is turned in. The Utility Department has the authority to deny an Application for Temporary Extension or Hardship at its sole discretion.

The City of Ishpeming will not be tracking payment plans. The City will manage the Utility Billing system as outlined in Ordinance 12-102 Subsection 6. Payments by customers made outside of these guidelines must have a current and approved Application for Temporary Extension or Application for Hardship Extension filed with the City.

At the discretion of the City Manager or the Department of Public Works Director this policy may be lifted in times of extreme weather. The City shall not be required to inform customers of the lift in policy. When lifted, the policy becomes effective immediately on April 1<sup>st</sup> or as soon as weather permits with disconnect notice going to customers with a past due balance the month prior to enforcing the policy.