

Village of Arena Water & Sewer Department

POLICY REGARDING ADJUSTMENTS TO UTILITY BILLS

1. **Policy and Purpose.** It is the policy of the Village of Arena to make adjustments to customer utility bills where said adjustment is necessary to correct billing errors, to correct errors due to equipment failure, or to fairly apply the rates and rules of the utility. The purpose of this policy is to improve customer service by enabling staff to quickly and accurately respond to customer requests for adjustments to utility bills rather than waiting for the matter to come before the Water & Sewer Committee and also setting forth the situations where adjustments will and will not be considered.
2. **Responsibility.** A panel made up of the Public Works Superintendent and the Village Clerk-Treasurer shall determine the amount, if any, of the adjustment to be made. The Clerk-Treasurer shall receive requests and notify the customer of the determination.
3. **Adjustments Allowed.** Staff is authorized to make adjustments to utility bills, without Water & Sewer Committee action, in the following cases:

Billing Errors: Where an error has occurred that results in an inaccurate utility bill being sent to a customer, staff shall correct the error as soon as discovered, whether by the customer or by staff. These adjustments include data recording and entry errors as well as meter failure if tested and found to be inaccurate.

Late Fees: Where a customer incurs late fees and requests an adjustment, staff may reduce or remove the late fee based on the customer's circumstances and payment history.

Sanitary Sewer: Where a customer experiences extraordinary water consumption during a billing period due to break in customer owned plumbing, equipment malfunction, etc. and said water did NOT enter the sanitary sewer system, staff may adjust the sanitary sewer charge to an amount that is more typical of the customer's normal usage. When an adjustment is made, a credit for the amount of the adjustment, the amount under consideration for adjustment shall not be payable until a determination on the adjustment is made. All other amounts not in dispute shall be due according to utility rules. When a customer pays an amount that is later adjusted, the credit shall remain on the account. No cash refunds shall be made for adjustments unless the account has been or is subsequently closed and a credit balance remains.

A customer may be granted no more than one adjustment in any 24-month period.

4. **Adjustments Not Allowed:** The Village will not consider adjustments for the following situations:
 - a. Leaking toilets and faucets
 - b. Leaking water softeners
 - c. Leaking outside yard faucets
 - d. Leaking irrigation systems
 - e. Faulty humidifier on furnace
 - f. Accidental water use
 - g. Any other plumbing outside or inside the house

5. **Requests for Adjustments.** The Village Clerk-Treasurer shall require the request to be in writing.

Written requests shall state the following:

- a. Name of customer (and property owner if different)
- b. Phone Number of customer (and property owner if different)
- c. Address of property where leak occurred
- d. Owner occupied or rental?
- e. Was property occupied at the time the leak occurred?
- f. Date customer became aware of leak
- g. Date leak was repaired
- h. Copies of repair invoices or receipts
- i. Letter of explanation of how the leak occurred
- j. Sketch of the exact location of the leak
- k. Photographs of the leaking pipe (if available)
- l. Authorization for the Utility representative to inspect the property where the leak occurred

The customer shall provide all information requested by the Village and deemed necessary to make a determination on the request.

6. **Response.** The utility shall respond to the written request for adjustment within ten (10) business days after receiving from the customer all the information necessary to make a determination on the request.

7. **Reporting.** The Clerk-Treasurer shall provide a quarterly report to the Water & Sewer Committee on adjustments made under this policy exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100).

8. **Appeals.** Customers who disagree with the determination of staff regarding their requested adjustments may appeal to the Water & Sewer Committee. Said appeal must be in writing and shall be scheduled to be heard at the next scheduled meeting immediately after receipt of the written appeal.

9. **Deduct meters.** The clerk may suggest to customers that if they are interested, a separate additional meter can be installed at the customer's expense to meter just garden/seasonal watering use of water. The deduct meter is subject to monthly fixed water fees and usage. This meter is only charged water fixed and usage fees and not subject to sewer fees.

10. **New Construction.** Customers with new construction and lawn seeding can contact the Village Office at 608-753-2133 to request a hydrant meter for temporary use. This hydrant meter is subject to a \$30 bulk water service charge as well as water usage fees. This hydrant meter is not subject to sewer fees.

Effective Date. This policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by the Village Board.

This policy was adopted by the Village Board this 5th day of November 2019.

_____, Village President, Kate Reimann

_____, Village Clerk/Treasurer, DaNean Naeger