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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council approves water bill credit for dripping faucets

MELISSA (March 11, 2021) In line with a stated commitment to conduct a thorough review of a pair of water-related issues tied directly to the recent winter snowstorm, the City Council has agreed with staff recommendations, including a credit for dripping faucets.

The two issues included: 1) a look at how dripping faucets may have affected the Winter Quarter Averaging (WQA) totals; and 2) if and how to mitigate the impact of dripping faucets on water bills.

Winter Quarter Averaging is the process by which Melissa, among the majority of city-managed utilities, calculates sewer charges. The annual averaging of water bills during the winter months, when most if not all of a home's water flows into drains, provides a reliable metric for sewer charges.

This year, that process ended with the reading of meters at 8 a.m. on Feb. 15. Any water consumed following that time was not factored into the WQA process, and thus not part of the sewer charge calculation. Staff has determined that, even though freezing temperatures began on Feb. 14, the amount of water that may have been expended by dripping faucets during those few hours before meters were read had minimal impact on the WQA and thus no change was recommended to the WQA calculations.

The second issue, on the other hand, has resulted in a staff recommendation that customers receive a financial credit for the water allowed to drip from facets as a means to prevent burst pipes.

Taking into account the fact that dripping volumes vary from home to home depending on size of the structure, the flow volume of each drip, the number of faucets, spigots and other fixtures being dripped, and other contributing factors, the City has authorized Staff to apply an across-the-board credit to every residential account in an equal amount. The City purchased 9.3 million gallons of water during the event and an equal distribution of water use, regardless of actual consumption, equates to 1,773 gallons per account, or approximately \$10.52 per household.

Council has approved the credit in that amount assured that the credit represents a fair and equitable rebate structure for this rare event. City Manager Jason Little, who headed the staff review, expressed his confidence in the process that devised the two conclusions.

"The impact of dripping on the WQA was extremely minimal," he said. "It's undeniable, though, that the dripping faucets that residents sensibly used to protect their plumbing, and the overall system by the way, should be considered for some type of adjustment. The Council was extremely receptive of the recommended adjustment for the full volume consumed during the extreme weather event. We're comfortable with the numbers, and fortunately, have enough of a reserve in our Utility Budget to implement this solution without negatively impacting the Utility Fund."

The credit will appear automatically in March bills, payable in April, without any action required of customers.

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ABOUT THE CITY OF MELISSA – The City of Melissa is a fast-growing progressive suburb with a small-town feel, located 35 miles north of downtown Dallas in the dynamic growth area of northeast Collin County. Melissa sits on 21 square miles, is home to over 16,000 people, and is easily accessible by way of three intersecting highways. Melissa has ample inventory of the highly-sought-after undeveloped frontage available on US 75 and SH 121, primed to serve the commercial needs of a booming Collin County. Melissa is a home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government.