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News Release

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Monthly base rates for water/wastewater drop again *Over 30 percent drop in two years, cost of water rises slightly*

MELISSA (November 6, 2018) In just two years, the monthly base rate for Melissa residential water customers has dropped nearly 35 percent, from the 2017 rate of \$31.50 to the 2019 rate of \$20.52, while the wastewater base rate has fallen almost 12 percent from \$25.13 in 2017 to \$22.45 in 2019.

“Customers get immediate savings from the lowered monthly base rate,” says Utility Billing Supervisor Carrie Mikeska. “Melissa’s steady residential growth has translated into a greater number of utility accounts. A higher number of accounts allows for the fixed costs of supplying water to be shared by a great number of customers, lowering the base rates for everyone.”

The new rate will show up on November bills, and apply to homes with three-quarter inch mains, by far the most common in use.

While the monthly base rate has fallen significantly, the cost of water has risen slightly. Keeping water rates at a manageable level has been a major emphasis for the City Council, and staff has worked resolutely to ensure that costs are kept in check.

The water fund is self-sustaining budget account that does not generate revenue above what is necessary to finance the purchase, storage and distribution of water and the collection of wastewater. All funds collected for water and wastewater are used for the personnel, infrastructure and other expenses related directly for that purpose.

The cost of water in each of the four tiers will increase slightly. Based on a tiered system that measures the amount of water used within individual households, the system is designed to help homeowners control costs. Less water used in the home maintains that customer at a lower-priced tier, whereas high users enter the higher-priced tier levels.

Tier 1 users, those who use between 1,000 and 10,000 gallons of water monthly will see the rate go from \$5.70 to \$5.83. Users in Tier 2, those who use between 10,001 and 15,000 gallons, will see an increase from \$8.99 to \$9.19. Tier 3, those who use between 15,001 to 50,000 gallons, will experience an increase from \$11.23 to \$11.48. Tier 4, those who use more than 50,000 gallons, will see an increase from \$11.84 to \$12.10.

Wastewater charges will go from \$6.09 per thousand gallons to \$6.90 per thousand gallons.

“Obviously, those households that practice good water conservation and who ensure that leaks are repaired, will pay less for water than those who do not,” added Mikeska. “In addition, residents also have the ability to influence their wastewater charges as well. Wastewater charges are calculated during the winter months, so people can multiply their savings by being aware of their usage from December to February.”

Melissa, like the majority of water providers, calculates wastewater charges using the winter averaging system. Because there is no reliable way to measure water that is being discharged into drains, toilets, baths, showers, sinks,

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Monthly base rate drops

November 6, 2018

Page 2

dishwashers, washing machines and other water-use appliances, Melissa uses the amount of water entering homes from Dec. 1 to Feb. 28 to determine wastewater or sewer rates for the following year.

Winter averaging is seen as an acceptable way of determining the wastewater charges because outdoor watering is either completely eliminated or severely curtailed during the winter.

“Also, customers who are using the City of Melissa portal are now able to monitor their water use and can immediately make adjustments to their habits in order to have a positive impact on their water bills,” she said.

The City of Melissa portal, a free program that allows users to closely monitor their water use, pay their utility bills, set up specific-use alerts, and send and receive messages from Utility Billing, can be set up by visiting the City’s website and clicking on the Online Bill Pay/Customer Portal link on the home page.

Converting to a paperless water bill also saves money and further eases homeowners’ billing and paying process.

“Signing up on the City of Melissa portal can have a major impact on monthly bills in several ways,” she said.

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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 10,000 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 a retail trade area of over 40,000 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, Melissa’s vision is to, “Leverage our community spirit, our passion for service and our beauty to grow a unique community that welcomes your future with us.”