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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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End of sewer winter averaging coincides with freeze

MELISSA (February 26, 2021) Like most municipalities, the City of Melissa's Utility Billing Department uses an averaging process during the winter months to calculate sewer charges for individual residences.

Called Winter Quarterly Averaging (WQA), the process in Melissa takes the average use of water during the billing periods covering December, January, and February, since these months are believed to be those in which the vast amount of water use is confined to indoors, and uses that average as the baseline for sewer charges for the ensuing 12 months.

This is necessary since there is currently no reliable method to accurately measure the amount of water flowing through a home's sewer pipes from all of the sinks and toilets, clothes washer, dishwasher, and other appliances. In addition, the winter season is when outdoor watering is normally suspended.

This year, the end of the February billing cycle occurred on Feb. 15, and meters were read by 8 a.m. on that day. That reading also marked the end of the WQA process, and any water used after 8 a.m. on Feb. 15 was not counted against the annual WQA calculation.

Significantly, the unusual winter storm that hit the area began taking hold on Sunday, Feb. 14 with temperatures beginning to hit the freezing mark. This caused residents to wisely allow water to drip from faucets hours before the meters were read, which brought an end to both the February cycle and the WQA. While the water from dripping faucets after 8 a.m. on Feb. 15, along with the subsequent days, was not counted against the WQA, any dripping faucets prior to 8 a.m. on Feb. 15 were factored into the WQA.

Utility Billing staff is evaluating various options for the WQA that take into account the unusual circumstances related to the storm and analyzing the impact of either staying with the current WQA methodology or implementing an alternative to it. All the while, staff will remain mindful that a change in sewer charging methodology will only make sense if it offers a benefit to a vast majority of customers where the current methodology does not. Once a thorough study is completed and a determination is made, staff will share it widely.

In addition, the dripping water that was captured in the March billing cycle which began as soon as the February cycle concluded on Feb. 15 is also being reviewed in order to find an equitable solution to the unusual weather conditions. Once developed and approved, staff will share that solution with customers.

Finally, any broken water lines that qualify for a leak adjustment can be included in an online application form designed to address these circumstances. Find the form by visiting: [Melissa, TX \(cityofmelissa.com\)](https://cityofmelissa.com/)

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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.