

## **ORDINANCE # 20.01**

### **CITY PROVIDED WATER AND SEWER SERVICES**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MERTZON, TEXAS, FOR THE GOVERNING OF WATER AND SEWER POLICIES WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF MERTZON; REPEALING THE EXISTING ORDINANCE NUMBER 06-05-17 AND AMENDMENT 10-01-18 OF THE CITY OF MERTZON AND REPLACING IT WITH CHAPTER 20, ARTICLE 01 CONSISTING OF 20 SECTIONS ENTITLED “CITY PROVIDED WATER AND SEWER SERVICES”, PROVIDING FOR: A FINDINGS OF FACT; A POPULAR NAME AND NUMBER SYSTEM; PURPOSE; DEFINITIONS; REQUIREMENTS; INVESTIGATION AND NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS; ABATEMENT; ENFORCEMENT INCLUDING MAXIMUM FINE OF \$500.00 FOR ORDINACE VIOLATIONS UNLESS THE VIOLATION IS RELATED TO FIRE SAFETY, HEALTH AND PUBLIC SANITATION IN WHICH THE MAXIMUM FINE IS \$2000.00 PER DAY PER VIOLATION; SEVERABILITY; SAVINGS CLAUSE; EFFECTIVE DATE AND PROPER NOTICE AND MEETING.**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Mertzon (“City Council”) has established, policies that will promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare within the City through the enactment of responsible rules for water and sewer applications, deposits, billing and payments, delinquent accounts, termination of services, discontinuance or refusal of services, property liens, water and sewer rates, new water and sewer connection fees; and

WHEREAS, the City Council seeks to establish fair, reasonable and efficient guidelines for the assessment and collection of fees related to the City’s provision of water and sewer services: and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds revisions of this ordinance will strengthen the economic stability of the City; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 51.001, Texas Local Government Code, the City Council is authorized to adopt an ordinance that is for good government, peace or order of the City and is necessary for carrying out a power granted by law to the City; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 51.012, Texas Local Government Code, The City Council may adopt an ordinance, not inconsistent with state law, that is necessary for the government, interest, welfare or good order of the City and

WHEREAS, the existing numbering system of the Ordinances of the City of Mertzon is not easily understood by the general public, the City shall herein and in the future number each Ordinance by Chapter and Section and place such adopted Ordinances in an Ordinance Book for easy reference.

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Mertzon, County of Irion, State of Texas that:

## **SECTION 1.0 FINDINGS OF FACT**

All of the above premises are hereby found to be true and correct legislative and factual findings of the City of Mertzon and are hereby approved and incorporated into the body of this Ordinance as if copied in their entirety.

## **SECTION 2.0 POPULAR NAME AND NUMBER**

This Ordinance shall be commonly referred to as Ordinance #20.01 "City Provided Water and Sewer Services".

## **SECTION 3.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose and intent of this section is to establish policies and guidelines for residents that utilize water and sewer services that address application of services, billing and payment procedures, water and sewer rates, new water and sewer line tapping rates and procedures.

## **SECTION 4.0 DEFINITIONS**

Unless the context requires otherwise, the following terms and phrases, as used in this Ordinance, shall have the meanings hereinafter designated:

- 4.1 CITY: the City of Mertzon, a municipal corporation, a political subdivision of the State of Texas.
- 4.2 CITY COUNCIL: the governing body of the City of Mertzon, Texas.
- 4.3 CUSTOMER: any individual who has an active water and or sewer account with the City.
- 4.4 ESCROW: a written agreement (or property or money) delivered to a third party or put in trust by one party to a contract to be returned after fulfillment of some condition; written agreement - a legal document summarizing the agreement between parties.
- 4.5 NONRESIDENTIAL: not residential; "the commercial or nonresidential areas of a town".
- 4.6 ORDINANCE: this ordinance establishing rules regarding water and sewer services.
- 4.7 PERSON: an individual, corporation, organization, government agency, business, trust, partnership, association, or any other legal entity.
- 4.8 PRO RATA FEE: a fee made against the customer to pay for the extension of utility lines required for services.
- 4.9 PRO RATA CONTRACT: a contract executed between the City and the customer who will agree and is financially obligated to pay for the utility line extension.
- 4.10 RENTAL PROPERTY: real or improvement property from which the owner receives payment from the occupant(s), known as tenants, in return for occupying or using the property. Rental properties may be either residential or commercial.
- 4.11 RESIDENTIAL: owner of real property or improvements not of commercial use.
- 4.12 UTILITY LINE: water and sewer line mains to provide services to customer.



## **SECTION 5.0 APPLICATION FOR SERVICES**

Before the City provides water or sewer services the owner or occupant of the property or business must complete an application and sign a service agreement provided by the City.

- 5.1 Binding Contract: The application shall contain a contract binding the applicant to pay the stipulated service rates at the time and in the manner provided for in this ordinance, reserving the City the right to enforce all rates and collect all charges in the manner provided in this Ordinance.
- 5.2 Death or Incapacity of a Customer: Upon the death or permanent incapacity of a customer, the account must be updated by completion of a new contract by the new property owner or person having lawful control of the property or closing out said account and releasing the escrow deposit to pay for accrued fees within 90 days.
- 5.3 Service Interruption: If the supply or service shall be interrupted or fail because of accident or any cause whatsoever, the City shall not be liable for damages for such interruption or failure, nor shall such failure or interruption for any reasonable period of time be reason to constitute a breach of the contract, nor in any way to relieve the customer from performing the obligations of the contract.
- 5.4 False Information: Any person making a false statement in the application shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties as prescribed herein.
- 5.5 Reapplying for Service or Transfer: The City may require a customer to pay delinquent bills and fees due for service at a service address prior to connecting service to a new or additional service address in the same customer's name. The City shall not require a customer to pay for previous tenant's delinquent account at the same service address that was not living with the previous applicant or conducting business with at the time the delinquency of account occurred. However, so long as a customer's bill is delinquent or so long as service is disconnected for lack of payment, the City will not transfer or connect service in the name of a different person for the same service address so long as the delinquent or disconnected customer continues to reside at that service address. A person applying for new service at a service address at which service has been disconnected for lack of payment but at which the delinquent customer no longer resides may be required to provide proof that the new service will be for persons other than the delinquent or disconnected customer. In the event that such new service is connected under a different person's name at the service address and it is subsequently determined that the delinquent or disconnected customer still resides at the service address, the city may disconnect service after giving no less than twenty-four (24) hours' notice to any person residing at the service address. Such notice may be verbal or by telephone, e-mail, fax, door hanger, or hand delivery. Service will not be disconnected if all past due amounts, late charges, and reconnection fees owed by the original customer are paid prior to the time and date specified in the notice.

## **SECTION 6.0 DEPOSITS**

Each customer, before connecting with City water and or sewer systems, shall make a deposit in advance, in the following amounts.

### **6.1 Required Deposits:**

- (a) \$100.00 - Residential Customer: must own real property and improvements.
- (b) \$125.00 - Rental Property: real property or improvements are rented.
- (c) \$150.00 - Nonresidential Customers: commercial businesses both owned or rented by applicant. This includes RV hook-ups at the rate of one deposit per active meter.
- (d) Deposit for Delinquent Customer: any customer moving away from Mertzon leaving a final bill in excess of the deposit, will be required should they return, to pay all amounts owed, a ten dollar (\$10.00) service charge, and a deposit equal to two times (2x) the deposit required from a new customer.

6.2 The City will retain the deposit amount as an “Escrow” deposit legally binding to the applicant for the duration of services.

6.3 Escrow deposits may only be used for balances remaining to finalize closed accounts or for a remaining balance of an unpaid account.

## **SECTION 7.0 BILLING CYCLE AND PAYMENTS**

Rates and fees for both water and sewer services rendered by the City shall be billed to the customer for all services on the same utility bill. The City will send a monthly bill including but not limited to water and sewer rates, late fees and NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) service charges.

7.1 Failure to receive a bill from the City does not relieve a customer of their liability to pay for services by the due dates outlined in the ordinance.

7.2 Each meter location will be assigned an account number and will retain that number until such time that the service is disconnected.

7.3 Every customer will have a meter and will pay at least the base rate each month. Each residence, building, business or commercial structure with water service is required to have its own water meter. No structure, building, residence or business may connect water service by connecting temporary or permanent connection to another metered structure, building, residence or business.

7.4 Interference of Meter Readings: If unable to read meters due to the following but not limited to; vehicles, pets, brush, debris, gates, etc., will require the meter reader to place a “Utility Notice” within a visible area seen by the resident notifying them of interference. If resident does not contact the City before billing, an average water usage rate based on the previous three (3) months will be billed. Correction of estimated readings will be made in the next billing cycle.

7.5 Damaged Meters: Meters that are not working properly will be replaced immediately upon report by the meter reader. Customers with damaged meters will be billed an average water usage rate based on the previous three (3) months water usage billing from when the meter was functioning properly.



- 7.6 Over and Under Read Meters: Minimum charges will be made on any over-read meters and an adjustment made to the customer's account. Customers with under-read meters will be billed the full amount on the next regular billing cycle.
- 7.7 Existing Service to Multiple Residence or Business Location: For existing water service accounts where more than one resident or business is served by a single meter, the amount of consumption will be charged to the person having authorized the account and paid the deposit. Each of the other residences or businesses will be billed the minimum. If a new residence or business is added to an existing service location, another water meter shall be required for each addition.
- (a) Apartments and Office Buildings: In the case of office buildings and apartment complexes the consumption will be charged to the person authorizing the account and having paid deposit.
  - (b) Duplexes: Duplexes will be required to have a water meter for each apartment.
- 7.8 Billing Cycle:
- (a) Every meter installed will be read on or about the 25th of each month. The billing clerk will compute and enter the amount of water used each month for each meter.
  - (b) Utility bills must be mailed on or before the last day of the month.
  - (c) All accounts are due and payable on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - (d) Accounts are past due on the 11<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - (e) Past due notices will be mailed by the 15th of each month with a late fee of \$10.00 being assessed.
  - (f) Accounts will need to be paid in full by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - (g) Accounts will be considered past due on the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month and will result in disconnection of services.
  - (h) Due dates that fall on a weekend or holiday will progress to the following scheduled business day.
- 7.9 Payments:
- (a) Partial payments are not allowed. The full amount for the water and sewer charges must be made on or by the 25th. Failure to make these payments will render the bill delinquent and service will be discontinued.
  - (b) If payment is made by nonsufficient (NSF) check, the City shall attempt to contact the customer one time to notify the customer that the check is NSF and shall charge the customer a NSF service charge of \$30.00. NSF checks and NSF service charges not paid by the 25<sup>th</sup> shall be treated as failure to pay and shall be subject to disconnection. Three (3) returned checks in a twelve (12) month period will result in checks no longer received for payment from customer.

## **SECTION 8.0 DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS**

Delinquent accounts are accounts not paid in full on or before the 25<sup>th</sup> and will have water and sewer services discontinued immediately.

- 8.1 Reconnection Fees: The following fees will be paid in full before reconnection of Services. Occurrences are evaluated on a calendar year per last disconnection.
- (a) First occurrence - \$25.00      (b) Second occurrence - \$50.00
  - (c) Third occurrence - \$75.00      (d) Fourth occurrence or more - \$100.00
  - (e) After hour services will be an additional \$40.00
- 8.2 Customers will be charged base rates for services during time disconnected for non-payment. An account will be closed 30 days after disconnection for non-payment. In case of rental, property owner may verify vacancy.
- 8.3 Nonsufficient (NSF) check received on a delinquent account will result in immediate disconnection of services along with a \$30.00 service charge.

## **SECTION 9.0 TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

- 9.1 Accounts will be closed thirty (30) days after disconnected for non-payment. In case of rental property, owner may verify vacancy. Upon termination of services, a final meter reading and or disconnection of sewer lines will be posted and a final bill computed. This final bill is due immediately upon receipt.
- 9.2 Deposits will be refunded only after all accounts are paid in full.
- 9.3 After ninety (90) days of non-payment an account shall be sent to an accredited collection agency of councils choosing, and a non-payment processing fee of 20% of the final bill will be accessed when bill is sent to collections.

## **SECTION 10.0 PROPERTY LIEN FOR DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS**

- 10.1 Delinquent water or sewer bills shall become a lien upon the property against which the bills are charged as authorized by Local Government Code, Section 552.0025. The City Council is hereby authorized and empowered to enforce collection on delinquent accounts according to the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas and ordinances of the City of Mertzon shall, by virtue of the customer accounts ledger, fix and establish a lien upon such real property for the payment of such water or sewer bill, including penalty and interest from such delinquent accounts which shall bear interest from date of delinquency at the rate prescribed by State law.
- (a) The City may by ordinance impose a lien against a customer's property, unless such property is a homestead as protected by the Texas Constitution.



- (b) The City's lien shall not apply to bills for service connected in a tenant's name after notice by the property owner to the City that the property is rental property.
- (c) The City's lien shall not apply to bills for service connected in a tenant's name prior to the effective date of the ordinance imposing the lien.
- (d) The City's lien shall be perfected by recording in the real property records of the county in which the property is located a notice of lien containing a legal description of the property and the account number for the delinquent charges. The City's lien may include penalties, interest, and collection costs.
- (e) The City's lien will be inferior to a bona fide mortgage lien that is recorded before the recording of the City's lien in the real property records of the county in which the property is located. The City's lien is superior to all other liens, including previously recorded judgment liens and any liens recorded after the City's lien.

#### **SECTION 11.0 DISCONTINUANCE OR REFUSAL OF SERVICES**

11.1 The City may refuse a continuance of services, decline of application or restoration of services when:

- (a) A customer who fails to pay any charges due outlined in this ordinance.
- (b) A person submitting an application for service to an additional or different address, if the person has delinquent charges on a previous account.
- (c) A person who violates any portion of this article or any City plumbing or health ordinance.
- (d) A customer at any premises if the City determines that a substantial waste of water, a health or safety hazard, or damage to the environment is occurring as a result of leaking, damaged, open, or disconnected private laterals, pipes, or drains on the premises.
- (e) A customer who refuses to install or maintain backflow prevention devices or other equipment or practices intended to protect the City's water supply from cross-connections or other contamination.
- (f) Theft of service by unlawful connection by any persons securing City water or sewer service without consent of the City.
- (g) Failure to discontinue or correct a known dangerous or unwarranted condition.
- (h) Inability to obtain reasonable access to utility meters.

- 11.2 Damage to City Property: The party determined by City staff to be responsible for damage to City property shall pay for repair or replacement costs plus necessary labor costs upon demand. Should the responsible party refuse or fail to make payment upon demand or within a reasonable time determined by City Council, the City may at its discretion disconnect service until such time as payment is made in full.

## **SECTION 12.0 WATER RATES**

Each metered account will be billed a Base Rate and a Water Usage Rate.

### **12.1 Base Water Rates:**

(a)	Residential Rates:	\$25.00
(b)	Commercial/Non-Residential Rates:	\$50.00
(c)	Non-profit Rates:	\$25.00
(d)	School Rates:	\$50.00
(e)	RV Park Rates (no more than 10 lots per meter):	\$50.00

### **12.2 Water Usage Rates:**

(a)	0-3,000 gallons	\$2.50 per thousand gallons
(b)	3001-6,000 gallons	\$3.00 per thousand gallons
(c)	6,001-10,000 gallons	\$8.25 per thousand gallons
(d)	10,001 gallons or more	\$12.25 per thousand gallons

## **SECTION 13.0 SEWER RATES**

Each property that utilize pubic sewer services will be billed a Base Rate.

### **13.1 Base Sewer Rates:**

(a)	Residence	\$25.00
(b)	Commercial/Non-Residence	\$50.00
(c)	Irion Co. ISD (school buildings only)	\$400.00 (Aug - May) \$275.00 (June - July)
(d)	RV Hook-Ups (up to 4 lots)	\$50.00 per account
(e)	RV Hook-Ups (5 lots or more)	\$50.00 and \$10.00 each lot

## **SECTION 14.0 TAPPING OF UTILITY LINES AND FEES**

- 14.1 Only city employees of the City of Mertzon will be allowed to tap into city lines.
- 14.2 All connections on the private side of the water/sewer tap will be the responsibility of the customer requesting service.
- 14.3 A shut-off valve will be installed on the customer's side of the meter outside the meter box.
- 14.4 A sewer clean-out will be placed in the city's right of way and maintained by the city.
- 14.5 Tapping fees must be paid in full before work begins.
- 14.6 Tapping fees are non-refundable unless otherwise decided by City Council.
- 14.7 Tapping fees are paid in addition to the required Escrow Deposit.
- 14.8 The service tap remains the property of the city after the customer pays the fee.



14.9 Water Line Tapping Fees:

- |     |                 |                                |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| (a) | ¾" Line         | \$ \$250.00                    |
| (b) | 1" Line         | \$ 300.00                      |
| (c) | Greater than 1" | \$ 300.00 (plus cost of meter) |

14.10 Sewer Line Tapping Fees:

- |     |        |           |
|-----|--------|-----------|
| (a) | 4"     | \$ 250.00 |
| (b) | 6"- 8" | \$ 500.00 |

**SECTION 15.0 EXTENSION OF UTILITY LINES AND FEES**

All water/sewer extensions will conform to the requirements of TCEQ Chapters 30 TAC 290 Water Distribution, Chapter 30 TAC 217-Wastewater Systems, AWWA Standards, City's Minimum Design Standards for Water and Sewer Distributions and City's current ordinance.

- 15.1 Only authorized contractors or agents approved by City Council or employees of the City of Mertzon will be allowed to perform the extension of lines.
- 15.2 Insurance: Contractors or agents must provide proof of insurance listing the City of Mertzon as "Additional Insured" in the amount of \$250,000.00 before work begins.
- 15.3 Contractors or agents are subject to inspection throughout the installation process.
- 15.4 All mains and water meters will be located within City owned streets and alleys or upon easements granted to the City in writing and properly recorded at the County Clerk's office.
- 15.5 Any sewer lift station not installed on City property will be maintained by the property owner.
- 15.6 All ditches for the installation of water and sewer lines must be covered as quickly as possible to avoid interference with public traffic upon said streets and alleys.
- 15.7 Upon completion to City specifications, the City will resume ownership and control of the new utility lines and meters.
- 15.8 Single Property Improvement: To improve a single property lying entirely within the City limits, where the property cannot be construed to be part of, or a result of, a subdivision or a larger tract, the City of Mertzon shall participate in said improvements to the extent that;
- 15.9 Land Development: Where an individual or group of individuals are developing a subdivision or larger tract broken into lots for resale, the developer is responsible for all costs involved to extend mains to service the developed property.
- 15.10 Pro Rata Fee: In order to recover fees required to extend new utility lines, a "pro rata fee" will be assessed independently per each request and is payable at the sole expense of the customer. Pro rata fees are an estimated amount and may be subjective to additional fees pending unforeseeable circumstances. Fees may include but not limited to:
- (a) trenching of utility line and or required rock boring machinery;
  - (b) shoring materials and required safety equipment;
  - (c) pipes, valves, tapping saddles, flanges, tees, cleanouts, meters, meter boxes;
  - (d) manholes, lift stations;
  - (e) bedding materials, concrete

- (f) road repair and required materials and
- (g) engineering and employee hourly fees.

- 15.11 Pro Rata Contract: The customer requesting the extensions shall enter into a contractual agreement with the City providing for payment in full of the pro rate fee. This contract shall specifically authorize the discontinuance of extension of line or service if payment has not been made in full within sixty (60) days of signed contract.
- 15.12 Additional Fees: Fees incurred due to unforeseen circumstances are payable by the customer and will be required to be paid in full before services are turned on. Any discrepancies in obligation of payment between customer and City will be decided by City Council.
- 15.13 Refunds: Construction and tapping charges are not refundable unless authorized by City Council.

## **SECTION 16.0 GENERAL POLICIES**

- 16.1 Water Troughs: All water troughs using City water will have float valves and a backflow preventer or an air-gap in compliance with the TCEQ regulations.
- 16.2 No Dumping: Dumping of sewer waste is not allowed at any time. Violators will be prosecuted.
- 16.3 Raw Sewage: If at any time any customer is determined to be running raw sewage onto private or public property, water services will be terminated until the proper arrangements are made to dispose of the sewage.
- 16.4 Petroleum Waste or Damaging Substances: If at any time the City determines that a customer is flushing petroleum wastes or any damaging substances into City sewer lines, the City may discontinue all utility services immediately. Customer will be required to make adequate and appropriate arrangements for the proper disposal of such wastes before services will be restored.
- 16.5 Liability for Damage: No responsibility or liability for the backup of sewage into the customer's yard or home will be assumed by the City.
- 16.6 Private Sewage Disposal Unlawful: Due to the potential health hazards of using a private sewage facility; it shall be unlawful for any person, corporation, firm or organization to disconnect from the City sewer system and establish or return to a private sewage facility.
- 16.7 No Trespassing: Trespassers onto City property that enclose the Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Stand Pipes or City Water Wells will be prosecuted.
- 16.8 Courtesy Required: Every attempt will be made by City employees to treat each customer in a fair and courteous manner. Any customer not in agreement with the policies set forth herein is invited to meet with the Council at any regularly scheduled meeting.
- 16.9 Exceptions by Council Only: Any deviation from the above policies will be made only by the City Council in regular session.
- 16.10 Periodic Review: This Utility Ordinance will be reviewed periodically by the City Council.



## **SECTION 17.0 PENALTY**

Any person violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined a sum not to exceed the amount allowed by law. Every violation of this Ordinance and each day that such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

## **SECTION 18.0 SEVERABILITY**

If any section, subsection, clause, phrase, or sentence of this Ordinance or the application thereof by any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance to other persons and circumstances.

## **SECTION 19.0 REPEAL CLAUSE**

All Ordinances and Resolutions of the City of Mertzon, Texas, in conflict herewith are hereby expressly repealed.

## **SECTION 20.0 Matters not addressed specifically by this Ordinance but by State Statute.**

### **20.1 Dumping of Solid Waste on Property or Into Waters:**

TEXAS HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 5. SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

SUBTITLE B. SOLID WASTE, TOXIC CHEMICALS, SEWAGE, LITTER, AND

WATER. CHAPTER 365. LITTER Sec. 365.012. ILLEGAL DUMPING;

DISCARDING LIGHTED MATERIALS; CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

- (a) A person commits an offense if the person disposes or allows or permits the disposal of litter or other solid waste at a place that is not an approved solid waste site, including a place on or within 300 feet of a public highway, on a right-of-way, on other public or private property, or into inland or coastal water of the state.

### **20.2 Impairment or Interruption of Public Service:**

- (a) Section 22.07, Penal Code - Paragraph (a) (4) - A person commits an offense if he threatens to commit any offense involving violence to any person or property with intent to cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas or power supply or other public service. An offense under Subdivision (4) of Subsection (a) of this section is a felony of the third degree.
- (b) Section 28.03, Penal Code - Paragraph (a) states that a person commits an offense if, without the effective consent of the owner: (1) he intentionally or knowingly damages or destroys the tangible property of the owner; or (2) he intentionally or knowingly tampers with the tangible property of the owner and causes pecuniary loss or substantial inconvenience to the owner or a third person or (3) he intentionally or knowingly makes markings, including inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings, on a tangible property of the owner.
  - (i) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor if the amount of pecuniary loss is less than \$50; a Class B misdemeanor if the amount of pecuniary loss is \$50 or more but less than \$500; a Class A misdemeanor if the amount of pecuniary loss is \$500 or more but less than \$1,500 or less than \$1,500 and the act causes in whole or in part impairment or interruption of any public water supply,

or causes to be diverted in whole, in part, or in any manner, including installation or removal of any device for any such purpose, any public water supply, regardless of the amount of the pecuniary loss; a felony of the third degree if the amount of pecuniary loss is \$20,000 or more but less than \$100,000; a felony of the second degree if the amount of the pecuniary loss is \$100,000 or more but less than \$200,000; a felony of the first degree if the amount of pecuniary loss is \$200,000 or more.

20.3 Theft of Service: Section 31.04, Penal Code

(a) A person commits theft of service if, with intent to avoid payment for service that he knows is provided only for compensation:

- (i) he intentionally or knowingly secures performance of the service by deception, threat, or false token;
- (ii) having control over the disposition of services of another to which he is not entitled, he intentionally or knowingly diverts the other's services to his own benefit or to the benefit of another not entitled to them; or
- (iii) he intentionally or knowingly secures the performance of the service by agreeing to provide compensation and, after the service is rendered, fails to make payment after receiving notice demanding payment.

(b) For the purpose of this section, intent to avoid payment is presumed if:

- (i) customer failed to make payment under a service agreement within 10 days after receiving notice demanding payment.
  - (1) for purposes of Subsections (a)(iii), (b)(i), notice shall be in writing, sent by registered or certified mail with return receipt requested to the customer listed on the service agreement.
  - (2) if written notice is given in accordance with Subsection (i), it is presumed that the notice was received no later than five days after it was sent.

(c) an offense under this section is:

- (i) a Class C misdemeanor if the value of the service stolen is less than \$20;
- (ii) a Class b misdemeanor if the value of the service stolen is \$20 or more but less than \$500;
- (iii) a Class A misdemeanor if the value of the service stolen is \$500 or more but less than \$1,500;
- (iv) a state jail felony if the value of the service stolen is \$1,500 or more but less than \$20,000;
- (v) a felony of the third degree if the value of the service stolen is \$20,000 or more but less than \$100,000;



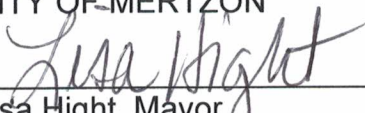
- (vi) a felony of the second degree if the value of the service stolen is \$100,000 or more but less than \$200,000; or
- (vii) a felony of the first degree if the value of the service stolen is \$200,000 or more.

INTRODUCED AND APPROVED ON THE 18<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER 2019, AND

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON THE 2 DAY OF Dec. 2019 by a vote of

3 (ayes) to 0 (nays) and 2 (abstentions) of the City Council of the City of Mertzon, Texas.

CITY OF MERTZON

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Hight, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheri Benson, City Administrator

