



TO: City Council  
Bob Harrison, City Manager

FROM: James Dean, Utility Services Division Manager  
Steve Groom, Finance Director

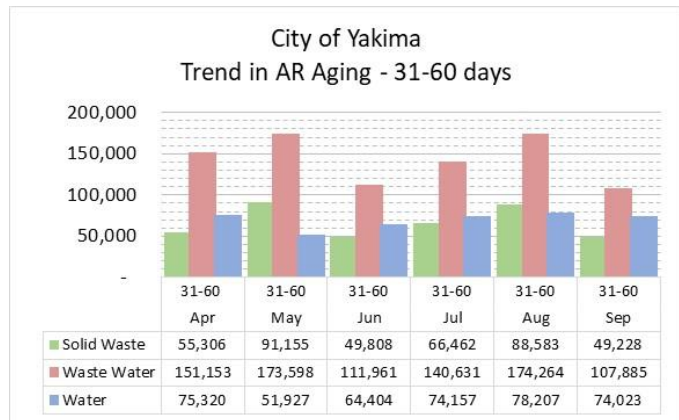
DATE: October 8, 2020

RE: Update on Utility Account Balances.

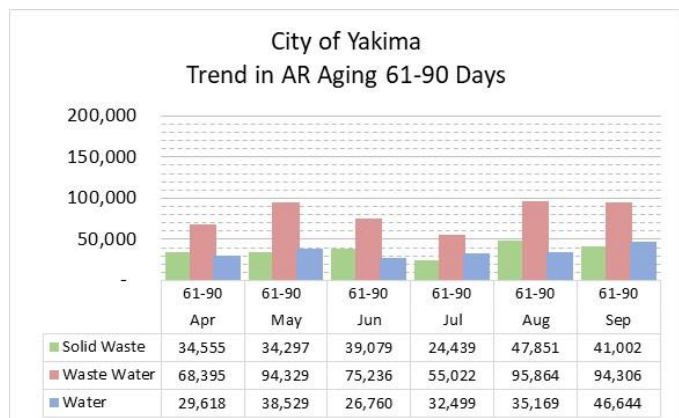
This is to provide feedback on the economic impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the City's Utility Services Billing, since the emergency declaration in March and subsequent Governor's Stay-At-Home Order. Receivable balances, in total, have remained in roughly the same range through September and the number of payment arrangements has fluctuated but remained in roughly the same range, under 200.

Utility Services bills for Water, Waste Water, Solid Waste & Irrigation on a 60-day rotating cycle. Approximately 10,000 of our customers are served by Nob Hill Water Association and are only billed for Waste Water and or Solid Waste services. The division also prepares invoices for the Storm Water utility which are billed initially through Yakima County as part of the property taxes.

As the graph at right shows, the trend in receivables for balances from July to September has fluctuated with no dramatic increase as might have been feared due to the economic effects of the COVID event in the economy. In September, the outstanding receivables balance for all three services was at or equal to the balances for April.



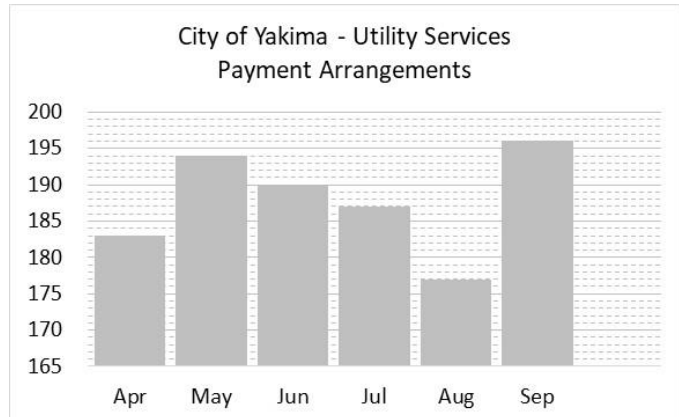
Receivable balances also show a somewhat cyclical fluctuation. Balances in July in the 61-90 day category were below or near the balances for April, and September balances are comparable to those in May and August. Wastewater had overall increased compared to the balances in earlier months and will bear further monitoring.



The trend in Pay Arrangements is shown at right.

Pay Arrangements are established for customers who will be unable to bills within the seven day grace period given past the due date of the bill. Pay arrangements are a snap shot in time and can vary depending on the day the report is generated.

There was a decrease in the number of pay arrangements for July and August compare to the 2 months however September shows an increase back to level comparable to May. Staff continues to monitor. There are quite a few continuing to make payments that will rotate off of this schedule.



In talking to customers, we're hearing that those who have a need are able to make arrangements. While the Pandemic is affecting them, the suspension of shut offs and making payment arrangements seems to fit their financial situation. Staff has met with customers at the Harman Center in order to assist with setting up online payments.

As always, please forward customer inquiries to Utility Services Division. Customers are encouraged to call (509) 575-6080.