



TO: City Council
Bob Harrison, City Manager

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

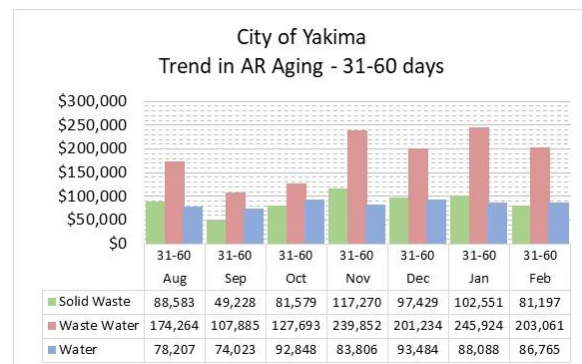
DATE: March 31, 2021

RE: Update on Utility Account Balances- February

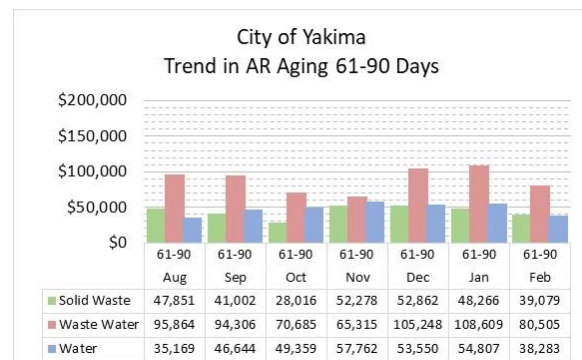
This is to provide feedback on the economic impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the City's Utility Services Billing, since the emergency declaration in March 2020 and subsequent Governor's Stay-At-Home Order. The primary question being answered is, generally are city residents able to pay their utility bills? Receivable balances, in total, have fluctuated. The number of payment arrangements has also fluctuated but this month decreased to 99 from 107 last month, indicating more customers able to pay their account. **Shut-offs for non-payment are still suspended**, meaning that we are not enforcing payment using shut-offs.

Utility Services bills for Water, Waste Water, Solid Waste & Irrigation on a 60-day rotating cycle, meaning bills are for 2 months of service. 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 31-60-day balances from August to February has fluctuated. Although there is seasonality to billing, citywide, a growing balance would indicate greater inability to pay outstanding balances and a declining balance would indicate that citywide balances are being paid to a greater degree. The economic effects of the COVID event in the economy have created varying results. For February, the outstanding receivables balances for Solid Waste, Wastewater and Water are all down compared to prior month, suggesting customers are able to pay their outstanding balances.

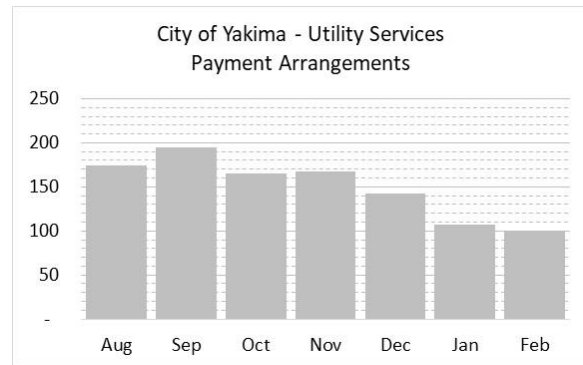


Receivable balances in February in the 61-90-day category continue to vary roughly in the range seen in the prior six months. Balances in this range indicate unpaid balances for two billing cycles. For February, the outstanding receivables balances for Solid Waste, Wastewater and Water are all down compared to prior month, suggesting outstanding balances are being paid down.



The trend in Pay Arrangements is shown at right, an indicator for the general economic health of the city, to the degree that this measures the number of citizens having difficulty paying their utility bills.

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



There was a slight decrease in the number of pay arrangements for February, compared to the prior month, and a continuing of the downward trend, suggesting that more customers are able to pay their outstanding current balances.

Staff continues to make efforts, in talking to customers, to identify those who have a need and to make payment arrangements. Staff has met with customers by appointment 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.