



TO: City Council
 Bob Harrison, City Manager

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

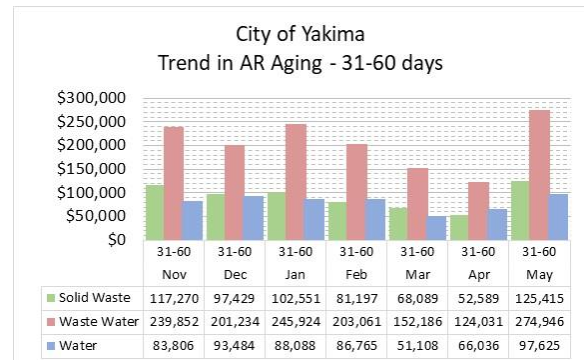
DATE: June 18, 2021

RE: Update on Utility Account Balances – May 2021

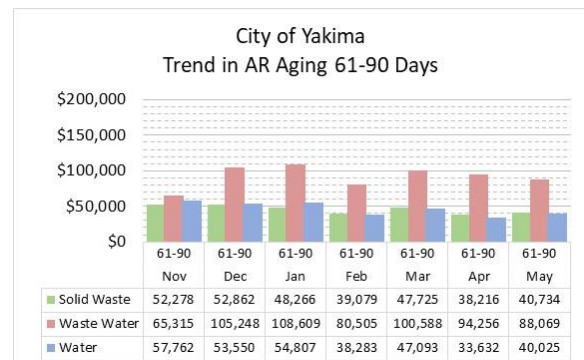
This is to provide feedback on the economic impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the City's Utility Services Billing, since the emergency declaration in March 2020 and subsequent Governor's Stay-At-Home Order. The primary question being answered is, generally are city residents able to pay their utility bills? Receivable balances, in total, have fluctuated. The number of payment arrangements has also fluctuated but this month increased to 82 from 75 last month. **Shut-offs for non-payment are still suspended**, meaning that we are not enforcing payment using suspension of service.

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 November to May has fluctuated. There is seasonality to billing and the economic effects of the COVID event in the economy have created varying results. Generally, the outstanding receivables balances for Solid Waste, Wastewater and Water were all trending down compared to prior month, however May increased due to annual seasonal use.

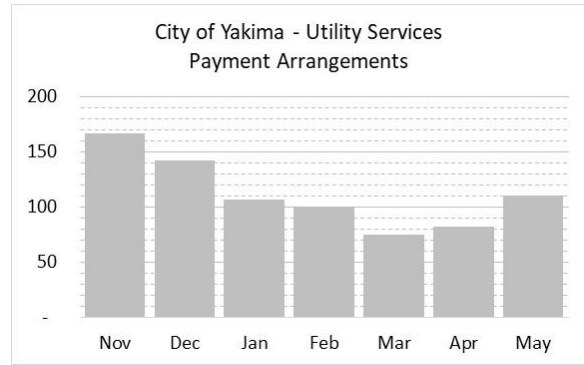


Receivable balances in May in the 61-90-day category continue to vary roughly in a steady range. Balances in this range indicate unpaid balances for two billing cycles. For May, the outstanding receivables balances for Solid Waste are down compared to prior month; Solid Waste and Water are both up slightly.



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 increase in the number of pay arrangements for May, compared to the prior month, but still generally-downward trend from earlier in the pandemic, 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.