

February 11, 2020

Local Utility Administration is Back

On November 9, 2019, the City of Copperas Cove was notified by FATHOM that they were going out of business. FATHOM was the City's contracted utility billing and customer service provider since 2017. The initial notification from FATHOM stated they would go out of business on November 30, 2019; however, FATHOM remained operational through December 17, 2019. This circumstance has been a frustration, an inconvenience, and created uncertainty for you and all utility customers.

Thankfully, the City of Copperas Cove is committed and working towards establishing an in-house full-service utility administration department. City Council officially directed the City Manager on November 21st to bring utility administration billing and customer service back in-house. Since that date, additional staff have been hired, a customer information and billing system has been selected, the utility administration office has been expanded, and a timeline has been developed to complete the transition.

This letter is primarily to provide you key points of the transition. The following sections will help you understand the impact to your current account status, future bills, and payment options.

The Transition Schedule

Past	April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FATHOM began billing and customer service
	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FATHOM went out of business All December bills were sent to customer (some were early) Began the transition to a new customer information and billing system (CIS)
Future	January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO utility bills were sent to customers Continue the transition to the new CIS
	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned completion of the transition to the new CIS Plan to begin sending bills to customers, no late fees or penalties will be associated with bills accruing during this transitional time period. TOWN HALL MEETING – February 20, 2020, 6:00 p.m., Civic Center
	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume full utility administration services TOWN HALL MEETING – Specific date, time, and location to be announced

Impact to Your Account Status

- You should have received your December 2019 bill
 - Most customers' bills were on their normal date and due date
 - Some customers' (cycles 5-7) bills were sent early with an abnormal due date and a shorter consumption period
 - This bill may not have reflected your previous payment

- Payments on your account
 - All payments on your account since November 2019 are recorded
 - The City recommends you retain all payment receipts
 - The City also recommends you continue making regular monthly payments toward your utility account or save those amounts for future payments
 - Penalties, Disconnections for Non-Payment, Payment Arrangements
 - Accounts will not be penalized during the transition period
 - Accounts will not be disconnected for non-payment during the transition period
 - The next bill sent (planned in February 2020) will not include penalties accruing during this transitional period
 - Penalties will begin to be assessed in April 2020 in accordance with City ordinances in the second round of bills once the City's CIS system is active again
 - Payment arrangements can be requested by customers upon receiving the next bill (additional considerations to be fully developed)
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Future bills

- Your next bill
 - Planned to be prepared in February 2020
 - Will not include late fees or penalties accrued during the transitional period
 - Will include water and sewer consumption since the December 2019 bill, approximately 60 days or more
 - Will include service base rates for all unbilled months, approximately 2 months since December 2019
 - You will be able to request a payment arrangement
 - Recommended you make monthly payments to your account or save the monthly payments to minimize the total amount due on the next bill
 - The following bill
 - Plan to get back to the normal billing schedule
 - Will include late fees if previous bill is not paid or a payment arrangement has not been requested
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Payment options

- Current payment options are listed in the attached FAQ document.
- Future payment options – There are several additional payments options that will be available such as online payments, automatic bank drafts and credit cards, and possibly automated phone and kiosk payments options. If you desire to set up automatic bank draft and credit card payments, the forms to authorize such payments may be submitted now.

We are optimistic about the opportunity to transition back to an in-house full-service utility administration service. We sincerely appreciate your patience, understanding, and respectful interactions with staff during this difficult transition. We will provide the same respectful service to you, our customers. Included with this letter are responses to frequently asked questions. More detailed and current transition information is located on the City's website: www.copperascovetx.gov. Lastly, if you need to call us, our phone number is 254-547-8718. Please understand that unusually high call volumes are being experienced due to this transition and it may take several days to return your call.

Sincere appreciation and optimism,

Ryan Haverlah, City Manager