CITY OF BETHEL, ALASKA

EMERGENCY ORDINANCE #22-07

AN ORDINANCE BY THE BETHEL CITY COUNCIL TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING BETHEL MUNICIPAL CODE 13.04.290 TO PREVENT WATER SHUTOFF FOR NON-PAYMENT OF CHARGES FOR CERTAIN ACCOUNT-TYPES AND DOLLAR AMOUNTS

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified COVID-19 as a significant public health risk;

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization designated the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic;

WHEREAS, since June 2020, there has been a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases throughout Alaska and within Bethel and surrounding communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel Finance Department has records of a number of residential and business accounts that face water shutoff because of delinquencies in payment;

WHEREAS, clean running water is a critical public health tool to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and during this public health emergency, it is imperative for the City of Bethel continue to provide water services to help prevent the spread of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the City wishes to provide customers flexibility during the pandemic to help prevent water shutoff because of nonpayment of charges;

WHEREAS, the City also wants to help ensure the customer account debt is not so high as to prevent reasonable opportunity for repayment;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Bethel, Alaska:

Section 1. Finding of Emergency. The Bethel City Council finds that an emergency exists in the City of Bethel due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which has been declared a global pandemic and a state and national public health emergency.

Section 2. Classification. This is a non-codified Ordinance of general and permanent nature and shall not become part of the Bethel Municipal Code.
Section 3. Bethel Municipal Code 13.04.290 is suspended and the City will not shut off residential water accounts due to nonpayment of charges for the effective period of this ordinance, unless a residential customer exceeds an account balance of $5,000 and a commercial customer exceeds an account balance of $10,000. This ordinance will only apply to a residential or commercial account with a debt greater than $1,000 if the customer coordinates a repayment plan pursuant to BMC 13.04.270 with the City of Bethel within thirty (30) days from the date of the account delinquency.

Section 4. Effective and Expiration Date: This ordinance is effective immediately upon adoption by the City Council and shall remain in effect for a period of sixty (60) days.

ENACTED THIS 8 DAY OF FEBRUARY 2022 BY A VOTE OF _ IN FAVOR AND _ OPPOSED.

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Mark Springer, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lori Strickler, City Clerk