RESOLUTION NO. 20110512-003

WHEREAS, Austin Water Utility's policy is to provide relief to its customers who experience high water and wastewater bills due to certain water leaks by processing an adjustment or credit on the customer's water bill; and

WHEREAS, as appropriate, the City of Austin wants to provide relief to customers who experience unusually high water bills; and

WHEREAS, the current resolution, number 20050929-056 was approved for this purpose and Austin Water Utility wants to ensure this resolution is consistent with Chapter 6-4 of the City Code that prescribes water conservation regulations that require repair of controllable leaks and prohibits the waste of water during irrigation; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Water Utility's conservation goals encourage customers to regularly monitor and take responsibility for water use; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin supports the City Council's Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force and its policy proposal recommending conservation measures for reducing water use within the City; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

Resolution number 20050929-056 is repealed and replaced by this resolution and the City Manager is directed to implement revised policies for providing relief for high water and wastewater utility bills for customers billed at a residential rate due to water leaks including the following policies:

1) Subsequent to repairing a leak, an adjustment will be processed for leaks related to indoor plumbing that were not within the customer's control, such as a broken water pipe or unapparent leaks.

2) Subsequent to repairing a leak, an adjustment will be processed for hidden water leaks relating to the customer's outdoor plumbing, such as an underground water leak from a break in the main water line to the house. Repairs for visible water leaks such as a dripping faucet, a broken sprinkler head or other issues such as pool cracks or malfunctioning pool auto fillers do not qualify for a leak adjustment, unless staff determines an exception is warranted.

3) A residential customer is eligible for one leak adjustment in a 12 month period, provided the customer submits documentation of the leak repair within 3 months of the repair date. A customer will not be eligible for a subsequent leak adjustment until 12 months after the credit for the prior leak adjustment was applied to the customer's account.

4) The Austin Water Utility will credit the customer's account for 50% of the excess usage. Excess usage is defined as usage that is over and above the customer's normal usage,

5) Charges for metered water consumption related to water leaks for up to two billing cycles affected will be calculated as follows:

The customer will be responsible for the remaining 50% of the excess usage, which will be calculated at the lower of (a) the standard

application of the regular billing rate, or (b) an established discounted rate for the excess usage.

6) If the customer's wastewater charges were higher than normal because of the water leak, the wastewater charges will be adjusted to the customer's normal usage and a credit will be applied to the customer's account.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to implement a revised administrative adjustment policy applicable to customers billed at a residential rate, that are currently making payments on a utility bill that includes unusually high water and wastewater bill charges that may not be attributed to a particular cause. With regard to this administrative adjustment policy the following applies:

1) Should the Director of Austin Water Utility determine that a customer's high use is likely related to customer actions or omissions not in compliance with City Code Chapter 6-4, the customer may not be eligible for an administrative adjustment. As such, customers with pools, spas and irrigation systems may not be eligible for an administrative adjustment.

2) A residential customer is eligible for one administrative adjustment in an 18 month period. A customer will not qualify for a subsequent administrative adjustment until 18 months after the credit for the prior adjustment was applied to the customer's account.

3) The Austin Water Utility will credit the customer's account for 50% of the excess usage. Excess usage is defined as usage that is over and above the customer's normal usage.

4) Charges for metered water consumption related to the unusually high water usage for up to the two billing cycles affected will be calculated as follows:

   The customer will be responsible for 50% of the excess usage, which will be calculated at the lower of (a) the standard application of the regular billing rate, or (b) an established discounted rate for the excess usage.

5) If the customer's wastewater charges were affected by the unusually high water usage, the wastewater charges will be adjusted to the customer's normal usage, and a credit will be applied to the customer's account.

ADOPTED: May 12, 2011 **ATTEST:** Shirley A. Gentry

Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk