



# Town of Yountville

6550 Yount Street  
Yountville, CA 94599

## Staff Report

**Agenda Item #:** {{section.number}}B

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## Yountville Town Council Staff Report

**DATE:** January 18, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council

**FROM:** Celia King, Finance Director

**PREPARED BY:** Celia King, Finance Director

**SUBJECT:**

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Arrearages Survey and California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program Financial Assistance in the amount of \$9,517 Applied to Past Due Utility Accounts.

**DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND**

In September 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) launched a survey for California community water systems. The survey aimed at gathering data regarding water and wastewater utility bills that were unpaid because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Town staff completed the survey, reporting twenty-three eligible past due accounts, and an arrearage amount of \$16,973. Accounts were considered eligible if they had accrued arrearages that were more than 60 days past due between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021 and remained unpaid at the time of completing the survey.

The Arrearages Survey was phase one of the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program. This program is supported by \$985 million in federal funding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The main goal of the program is to offer financial assistance to water and wastewater customers that were unable to pay their bills because of the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once the Arrearages Survey had been completed the Town was notified that the period for applying for funding was open. The priority of the program has been to relieve customers of water related charges only. This includes the water flat fee, water usage charges, water system replacement fee and fireline fees. Town staff submitted the application in November, requesting a final amount of \$9,517 to assist fifteen customers with past due water related charges.

Town utility customers did not have to take any action to receive this financial assistance. Town staff applied for the funding on the customers behalf, and once the payment was received from the state in December, automatically applied it to eligible customer accounts. The customers were then notified that their account had been credited. A sample of the letter sent to arrearage payment recipients is included at the end of this staff report.

By the time the payment was received from the state, one of the accounts previously included in the funding request had been able to pay their past due amount. The amount applicable to that account was not credited to the customer, but was instead repaid to the state, as required by the program.

Receipt of this funding from the state helps to ensure that the Water Utility Enterprise Fund does not have to shoulder the financial burden of possibly writing off these past due account costs which in turn benefits all ratepayers in the long run.

Yountville is fortunate to have a relatively small number of utility accounts and associated past due balances during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to many other communities. This reliable revenue source is key to consistent utility services and necessary for day-to-day operations.

Please [click this link](#) to learn more about the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program on the SWRCB website.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Exempt per California Environmental Act (CEQA) Guideline, Section 15061(b)(3)

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact? Yes

Is it Currently Budgeted? No

Where is it Budgeted? N/A

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? Discretionary

Is there a Staff Resource Impact? Yes

### **STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL**

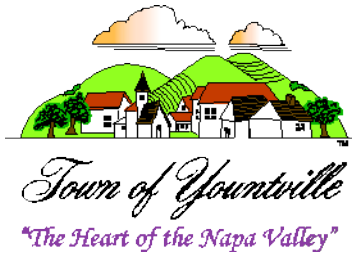
Is item Identified in Strategic Plan? Yes

If yes, Identify Strategic Goal and Objective. **Exceptional Town Services and Staff:** The Town supports its talented staff who deliver high quality municipal programs and services while maintaining public infrastructure for the benefit of the community.

Briefly Explain Relationship to Strategic Plan Goal and Objective. Applying for financial assistance on behalf of utility customers, to provide relief for those who faced financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, aligns with the Town's goal of upholding a superior level of service to the Yountville community.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and File



December 22, 2021

«Customer\_first\_name» «Customer\_last\_time»  
«Customer\_addr\_1»  
«Customer\_cust\_no», «Customer\_state» «Customer\_zip»

Dear «Customer\_first\_name»,

The Town of Yountville recently applied for funding through the California Water and Wastewater Arrearages Payment Program offered by the State Water Resources Control Board, and was able to secure a payment to relieve eligible customers of a portion of their past due water bills.

**As of 12/21/2021, the Town of Yountville has applied \$AMOUNT of this payment to unpaid utility bills for account number ACCOUNT NUMBER, bringing your past due account balance, due immediately, to \$AMOUNT.**

As a portion of your unpaid utility bills have been relieved, we would appreciate prompt payment for the remaining balance. Failure to pay the amount due on your account may lead to past due fees and/or discontinuation of water service.

Payments can be made by credit card online at [www.townofyountville.com](http://www.townofyountville.com) by clicking on the Pay My Bill icon, by credit card over the phone by calling (707) 944-8851, or by check through the mail at:

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Please feel free to reach out to the Finance Department at (707) 944-8851 with any questions or to inquire about a payment plan.

Thank you,

Finance Department  
Town of Yountville