



City of Greensboro

Melvin Municipal
Office Building
300 W. Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

Agenda Report

File Number: 2021-326

Agenda Item# C.4.

Agenda Date: 10/19/2021. **Department:** Water Resources

Meeting Type: Council Meeting **Category:** Consent Agenda

Title: 2021 - 326 Resolution to Authorize the Water Resources Director to Enter Into Agreements with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the Guilford County Department of Social Services for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

Council Priority: Place an 'x' in the box.

- ☐ Create an Environment to Promote Economic Development Opportunities and Job Creation
- ☒ Maintain Infrastructure and Provide Sustainable Growth Opportunities
- ☐ Promote Public Safety & Reduce Crime
- ☐ Exceptional Customer Service and a Diverse City Government Workforce
- ☐ Ensure Fiscal Stewardship, Transparency, & Accountability

Council District: All

Public Hearing: No

Advertising Date/By: N/A

Contact 1 and Phone: Michael Borchers, 336-373-2494

Contact 2 and Phone: Kristine Williams, 336-373-2556

PURPOSE:

Water Resources requests City Council to authorize the Water Resources Director to enter into agreements with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the Guilford County Department of Social Services for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). The agreements will allow the City to share water and sewer account data to determine customer eligibility for the funding.

BACKGROUND:

The LIHWAP is a new federally-funded program that provides emergency assistance to low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, which pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater services. Unlike other funding sources for utility bill assistance, this funding is purely need-based, and doesn't require the customer to prove that they were financially impacted by COVID-19. The funds were appropriated by

Congress through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Legislation requires LIHWAP to “[u]se existing processes, procedures, policies, and systems in place to provide assistance to low-income households, including by using existing programs and program announcements, application and approval processes.” Therefore the plan is derived from the current Low Income Household Electric Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The administration of the plan has been delegated from the Federal Government through the states to the county level. In order to expedite payments, Guilford County is asking for Vendor and Data Share Agreements. These agreements will allow Guilford County to match their database of current needs based recipients with the City of Greensboro’s list of customer accounts that are currently disconnected or in jeopardy of disconnection and automate payments for matches to the City of Greensboro on the account holder’s behalf.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Participation in this program helps provide water and sewer bill payment assistance to customers through Federal funding. Though there isn’t a direct budget impact, it does reduce water shut-offs for non-payment, and expenses of debt collection.

ACCOUNT NUMBER:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

It is recommended that City Council authorize the Water Resources Director to enter into agreements with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the Guilford County Department of Social Services for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).