

FY 2021-2022 Virginia Beach Budget Response to Council Questions

Question Number: 61

Question: Please provide a breakdown of the \$8.4M of Utilities relief. Separation of local funding and CARES Act.

Date Requested: 4/14/21

Requested By: Councilmember Moss

Department: Public Utilities

Response: In May 2020, the City Council approved \$4 million for the **City Services Bill Pandemic Relief Program**, with \$2.4 M provided by the Water and Sewer Fund and \$1.6 M from the General Fund to cover solid waste and storm water charges. This program provided assistance for up to four City Services Bills with a due date of March 2020 or later for those who lost employment in March 2020 or later. Additional information about this program is available here:

<https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/public-utilities/customer-service/Pages/CSPandemicRelief.aspx>

In December 2020, the City Council approved \$4.4M in **CARES Act** Grant funding from the State to support a utility relief assistance program for which any non-Governmental account is eligible. This program requires self-certification of a COVID-related impact, but it can only cover water and sewer-related charges and is limited to service dates (not bill date or due date) of March 1, 2020 or later. City Council agreed to allow usage of the City Services Bill Pandemic Relief funding to provide eligible applicants with relief for solid waste collection and storm water charges, as well as covering bill periods that were allowable for the City Services bill that were ineligible for this program. More information about this program is available here:

<https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/public-utilities/customer-service/Pages/PUCARES.aspx>

Relief provided to date:

- **City Services Bill Pandemic Relief Program:**
 - 4,185 accounts covering 21,299* bills have been approved for total relief of \$964,038.39

Question Number: 61 (cont.)

- Relief to date: \$164,068.43 is Water and Sewer funding (water and sewer charges) and \$799,969.96* is General Fund (storm water and solid waste collection charges).
- The average amount per account is \$230.36.
- **CARES Act Pandemic Relief Program:**
 - 3,893 accounts covering 19,507 bills have been approved for a total relief of \$1,262,006.35 (all federal funding).
 - The average amount per account is \$324.17

Other Programs Available:

- Included on our website is a listing of available assistance options, including two relief programs specific to pandemic, a payment plan option for up to two years to settle outstanding balances, the Water Assistance and Help 2 Others (H2O) programs, and community resources. Specific information can be found here: <https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/public-utilities/customer-service/Pages/PU-PaymentAssistance.aspx>