

GILES COUNTY

WATER SERVICE

POLICY

(Revised 07/16)

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SECTION ONE - DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 "County" shall mean Giles County.
- 1.2 "Customer" shall mean the party who has applied for continuing water service and will be responsible for paying periodic bills. Each customer shall be served by a separate water service connection. A lessor with more than one living unit such as apartments or mobile homes will be considered the customer for such units.
- 1.3 "Buildings" shall mean any structures having a roof supported by columns or walls for the housing or enclosure of persons, animals, or personal property.
- 1.4 "Living Unit" shall mean a single-family unit with one or more rooms, in a building designed for living or sleeping.
- 1.5 "Accessory Building" shall mean a building that contains no living units.
- 1.6 "Persons" shall mean any individual, firm, company, association, society, corporation, or group.
- 1.7 "Premises" shall mean a tract of land with buildings and or living units thereon.
- 1.8 "Owner-Customer" shall mean the customer who owns the premises to which water service is provided.
- 1.9 "Tenant-Customer" shall mean the customer who rents the premises to which water service is provided.
- 1.10 "Public Water Main" shall mean a water main in which all owners of abutting properties have equal rights and which the County controls.
- 1.11 "Water Service Connection" shall mean the water service line from the public water main to the customer's property line. A water service connection shall include a corporation cock, service pipe to a meter, meter box, meter, meter yoke and curb stop.
- 1.12 "Satisfactory Payment" shall mean an account with not more than one late payment and without an overdue balance.
- 1.13 "Service Line" shall mean the water line connecting the public water main to a customer's premises.

SECTION TWO - APPLICATION FOR WATER SERVICE AND WATER SERVICE CONNECTIONS

- 2.1 Any person desiring water service from Giles County must make application upon forms prescribed by the County. These forms are available at the Giles County Administration Building at 315 North Main Street, Pearisburg, Virginia 24134.
- 2.2 Giles County reserves the right to deny service for any good and sufficient reason.
- 2.3 The applicant will be responsible for all bills incurred in connection with the service furnished.
- 2.4 In accepting water service from Giles County, every customer does hereby agree that the County of Giles shall have the right to install necessary facilities including a meter vault and stub out at or near the property line of customer for the purpose of providing water service to the customer.
- 2.5 Duly authorized agents of the Giles County shall have access, at all reasonable hours, to the premises of the customer for the purpose of installing or removing Giles County property, inspecting piping, reading or testing meters, or for any other purposes in connection with the Giles County service facilities.
- 2.6 Each applicant who is approved for connection to the Giles County Water System shall pay a connection fee. If a meter set is in place to service a residence but has not been connected, a Seven Hundred and Fifty (\$750.00) connection fee must be paid. If there is no meter set in place, a connection fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00). This fee will entitle the customer to the following labor and materials: labor required to tap or connect to the public water main, installation of a corporation cock, service pipe to the property line, curb stop, ¾ inch meter, meter yoke and meter box. Road bores or open cuts necessary to provide service to the customer, and/or other incidental cost not mentioned in the preceding sentence shall be additional cost added to meter connection and availability fee to derive customer's total expense for connection to Giles County's system. The County may permit connections pursuant to Section 2.7 in which event the provisions of Section 2.7 shall apply.
- 2.7 When and if the County expressly authorizes the applicant to make a service connection, as specified, a connection charge in the amount of \$20 per connection shall be paid by the applicant for inspection. The owner will be allowed to make a service connection if it is made in accordance with the specifications of the County. The customer will be required to purchase all materials necessary for making a water connection from Giles County. Only those materials purchased from the County will be used in making a water service connection. The customer will also inform Giles County when the construction will occur in order that an agent of the County may inspect it. No water will be provided until such a time that the County has inspected and approved the service connection.
Persons becoming subscribers to the service of the County, subsequent to the initial installation of the service connection, will be required to pay a fee of \$50. This fee will cover the administrative costs for billing address changes, and meter installation. Persons who rent properties accepting water service from Giles County will be required to pay a deposit of \$200, unless prohibited by Federal, State, or Local funding agencies. Property owners accepting water service from Giles County will be required to pay a deposit of \$100. This deposit shall be retained by the County as security for payment of any sums due the County by the customer. Deposits shall be payable at the time of application for service. Upon termination of service or two years of satisfactory payments, the County shall refund the deposit to the subscriber.

- 2.8 Meters shall be installed as close as practical to the property line of the customer's premises insofar as possible where such property line adjoins a public roadway. The customer shall be responsible for connecting his/her service line to the water meter and for maintaining the water line that connects his/her premises to the meter.
- 2.9 Water service connections, which include the meter and meter vault, shall remain the property of Giles County and shall be maintained by the County at its expense. In certain circumstances, due to the distance of properties from a water main, multiple customers may be served through a master meter with subsequent individual meters for each customer. In these circumstances the customers will be responsible for maintenance of the service lines past the master meter and the cost of maintaining the individual meters. These customers will also be responsible for any water loss that occurs past the master meter. Such connections will be subject to a separate agreement specifying the specific terms of cost sharing and water loss provisions applicable to those connections.
- 2.10 All new customers will install a cut-off at the point where the water enters the building or at the nearest accessible point. The County strongly suggests that existing customers also provide this safety measure.
- 2.11 If a customer is currently paying a non-user fee and requests to connect to the County Water System, the non-user fee shall be credited towards the connection fee. The customer shall not receive a credit greater than the connection fee required from the County at the time service is requested. (See Section 2.6 for connection fees). The non-user fee shall remain in effect until such time that a customer requests service and shall not be suspended because a customer has paid the equivalent of a connection fee. No customer shall be entitled to use this credit as a means of reimbursement for the actual purchase of water or any other County service. No portion of the non-user fees shall be eligible for cash reimbursement. Credit may be not transferred between individuals or service locations.

SECTION THREE - RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WATER METERS

- 3.1 The County will determine the number, location, type and size of meter(s) to be installed.
- 3.2 Where meters are installed within a building, the customer shall provide at his expense a readily accessible and protected location for the installation of the meter at such a point as will control the entire supply to the premises, which location shall be acceptable to the County as convenient for its service.
- 3.3 The County at its expense will maintain meters insofar as ordinary wear is concerned, but the customer shall pay for any damage caused by the customer.
- 3.4 No person other than an agent of Giles County is to enter into a meter box. Any person entering into a meter box without the consent of a Giles County agent for any reason will be assessed a fee of \$500 which must be paid in full before water service is continued.

3.5

SECTION FOUR - METER READING, BILLING, AND COLLECTION

- 4.1 Meters will be read and bills rendered once every two months. The County reserves the right to vary the dates or length of period covered, temporarily or permanently, if necessary or desirable.
- 4.2 A charge of \$25 will be made for customers having checks returned from the bank for "insufficient funds" or other reasons.

- 4.3 A customer may request that a meter be reread due to a suspected error. A charge of \$5 will be imposed if the new reading does not reveal an error.
- 4.4 The County will only turn the water off once at the customer's request. Before the water is turned back on, the customer must install a cutoff valve on his premises or pay a \$5, turn-on, turn-off fee.
- 4.5 Customers shall be responsible for paying their water bills as calculated by their usage and the County's established rates.
- 4.6 Charges for water service commence when the meter is installed and service connections are made.
- 4.7 Current County wide water rate is \$24.20 per month for 0 – 2,000 gallons. Additional \$0.0055 per gallon over minimum will be charged. **Meters will be read and bills be mailed bi-monthly.** (See Section Five – Reduced Water Rate Policy)
- 4.8 Separate bills will be issued for each meter read. No bills will be combined.
- 4.9 Bills are due when rendered, delinquent after 30 days, and if not paid in 45 days, the County may discontinue. If water service is discontinued by the County, a \$50.00 fee will be assessed to restore service for the first discontinuance. Second and subsequent discontinuance of service for non-payment, a \$100 fee will be assessed to restore service. Full balance plus fees must be paid before water service is restored. (See Section 3.4). A late fee of ten percent of the delinquent bill amount shall be imposed on any bill that becomes delinquent.
- 4.10 Each customer shall be responsible for furnishing the County with his/her correct addresses. Failure to receive bills will not be considered an excuse for nonpayment nor permit an extension of the date then the account will be considered delinquent.
- 4.11 The County reserves the right to correct any bills rendered in error.
- 4.12 If a customer's meter should fail to register for any reason or if the meter reader should be unable to gain admittance, for any reason, to the premise at the time the meter is due to be read, an average of the consumption shown by three previous consecutive like billing periods, or in case of a new customer, a reasonable estimate of consumption will be used.
- 4.13 If while reading a residential meter, an agent of Giles County determines that more than 60,000 gallons of water has flowed through a meter since the last reading cycle, the agent will notify the customer of the high usage and ask the customer to check for leaks. If no repairs or explanations are made within 24 hours, beginning from the time that the customer is informed, the customer's service will be turned off until such a time that the leak is repaired and the repair is verified by an agent of the County.
- 4.14 In the event of a water leak, the customer shall immediately notify the County. The County will not be responsible to fix or pay for the repairs of any leaks that occur outside the meter box on the effluent side of the meter.
- 4.15 When a leak has occurred on the customer's side of a meter the County will adjust the bill of that customer **once within a 24-month period.** Charging the customer the rate at which the County is purchasing water from the Giles County Public Service Authority will determine this adjustment. This cost will include no debt retirement for the County's system. In order that a customer receive this adjustment, the County must be notified of the leak, and an agent of the County must verify that the leak has been repaired. No other adjustments will be made unless the entire service line is replaced.

SECTION FIVE – REDUCED WATER RATE POLICY

- 5.1 All customers that meet the criteria set forth in this section shall be entitled to a reduced water rate calculated at seventy five (75) percent of the rate set forth in Section 4.7:
1. Total household income is less than \$25,000 per year.
 2. All residents of the household must be either, at least 65 years of age, or at least one person in the household must be totally disabled.
- 5.2 In order to receive this reduced rate, an application must be completed and a copy of the customers recent W-2 form and/or certification from a physician that you or one person in your household is totally disabled. This proof of income must be received on a yearly basis to remain eligible for this program. (Revised 11/15/01)

SECTION SIX - DISCONTINUANCE OF WATER SERVICE

- 6.1 Service may be discontinued by the County after five days notice for any of the following reasons:
1. For molesting or tampering by the customer, or others with the knowledge of the customer, with any meter, connection, service pipe, curb cock, seal, or any other appliance of the County controlling or regulating the customer's water supply.
 2. For failure to provide the County's employees free and reasonable access to the County facilities located on the premises served.
 3. For non-payment of any account for water supplied, for water service, or for any fee or charge accruing under these regulations.
 4. For violation of any rule or regulation in association with the utilities provided by the County.
 5. Insufficiency of supply due to circumstances beyond the County's control.
 6. Strike, riot, fire, flood, accident, or any unavoidable cause.
 7. Customers maintaining a cross connection between the public water supply and a private water source.
- 6.2 Discontinuing the supply of water to a premises for any reason shall not prevent the County from pursuing any lawful remedy by action of law or otherwise for the collection of money due from the customer.
- 6.3 When water service to a customer has been terminated for any of the above stated reasons, other than temporary vacancy of the premises, it will be renewed only after the conditions, circumstances, or practices which caused the water service to be discontinued are corrected to the satisfaction of the county and upon payment of all charges due and payable by the customer in accordance with these Rules and Regulations.

SECTION SEVEN - GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 7.1 Employees or agents of the County are expressly forbidden to demand or accept any compensation for any service rendered to its customers except as covered by its rates, rules and regulations.

- 7.2 No employee or agent of the County shall have the right or authority to bind it by any promise, agreement, or representation contrary to the letter or intent of these rules and regulations.
- 7.3 No employees or representative of the County shall perform any work on private property unless said work is expressly authorized by another section of these rules and regulations.

SECTION EIGHT - PRESSURE AND CONTINUITY OF SUPPLY

- 8.1 The County does not guarantee a sufficient or uniform pressure, or an uninterrupted supply of water, and customers are cautioned to provide sufficient storage of water where an absolutely uninterrupted supply must be assured, such as for steam boilers, domestic hot water systems, gas engines, etc.
- 8.2 Where pressure to a customer's premises is greater than he wishes, it shall be his/her responsibility to install the proper regulating device to reduce the pressure to the extent desired.
- 8.3 The County shall have the right to require the adjustment, modification, or removal of any quick opening or closing valve or other device installed in a premises, the operation of which results in an unreasonable fluctuation of pressure in the County's system.

SECTION NINE - INTERRUPTIONS IN WATER SUPPLY

- 9.1 The County may at any time shut off the water in the mains in case of accident or for the purpose of making connections, alterations, repairs, changes, or for other reasons and may restrict the use of water to reserve a sufficient supply for public fire service or other emergencies whenever the public welfare may require it.
- 9.2 While it is the intention of the County to give notice in advance of any work that must be done that will necessitate any interruption of the supply, such notice shall be considered a courtesy and not a requirement on the part of the County. Property owners shall so regulate their installations connected with the water supply system that damage will not occur if the water is shut off without notice.

SECTION TEN - FIRE HYDRANTS

- 10.1 When and to the extent that funds may be available and water pressure and volume are adequate, the County will install, at its expense, public fire hydrants whenever and wherever, in its opinion, such hydrants may be required to provide adequate fire protection service. Upon the written request of and upon payment of applicable charges by any commercial, industrial, or governmental unit or other interested party, the county will install and connect additional public fire hydrants on public property.
- 10.2 After the installation of each hydrant, the County will assume the ownership, maintenance and operation thereof.
- 10.3 The use of public hydrants shall be restricted to the taking of water for the extinguishments of fires. Water shall not be taken from any public fire hydrant for construction purposes, sprinkling streets, flushing sewers or gutters or for any other use unless specifically permitted by the County for the particular time and occasion.
- 10.4 The County shall not be considered in any manner an insurer of persons or property, or to have undertaken to extinguish fires, or to protect any persons or property against loss or damage by fire or otherwise, and shall not be responsible to any person or persons for any loss, damage, or injury by reason of fire, water, failure of supply water or pressure, or any other cause whatsoever.

10.5 The County shall not be required to extend its mains for the purposes of supplying public fire hydrants that may be desired except under mutually acceptable arrangements to defray the installation cost of such extensions.

MANDATORY WATER CONNECTION ORDINACE

After public hearing on November 8, 1995, pursuant to notice published in the Virginian Leader on October 25, 1995 and November 1, 1995,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Supervisors of Giles County, Virginia as follows:

The owner, tenant, or occupant of each lot or parcel of land which abuts upon a street or other public way containing a Giles County water main or water system, upon which lot or parcel a building shall have been constructed for residential, commercial, or industrial use, shall, within ninety (90) days after receipt of written notification from the County, connect such building with such water main or water system provided that the water main or water system is located within three hundred (300) feet of the building to be served, and at which time the owner, tenant or occupant shall cease to use any other source of water supply for domestic use. Mandatory connection shall not be required if the connection can only be achieved by crossing a highway, railway, stream, or in other situations that, in the opinion of the County, make such a connection prohibitively expensive or difficult. All such connections shall be made in accordance with rules and regulations that shall be adopted from time to time by the County, which rules and regulations may provide for a charge for making any such connection in such amount as the County, may fix and establish from time to time.

Those persons having a domestic supply or source of potable water meeting Virginia Department of Health standards shall not be required to discontinue the use of same. However, those persons shall pay a non-user charge. This charge shall be derived from the debt retirement associated with the Giles County water systems and established from time to time by the Giles County Board of Supervisors. The non-user fee at the time this ordinance is adopted shall be six dollars (\$6.00) per month and shall be assessed against and paid by the owner of the parcel of land for which the fee is applicable.

Persons who have obtained exemption from or deferral of taxation pursuant to ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of Giles County, Virginia, authorized by Section 58.1-3210 of the Code of Virginia, shall be exempted or deferred by the authority from paying any charges and fees authorized by the preceding paragraph, to the same extent as the exemption from or deferral of taxation pursuant to such ordinance.

Adopted at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Giles County, Virginia, held on October 20, 2005.

	VOTING FOR	VOTING AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
HOBBS	_____	_____	_____	_____
GENTRY	_____	_____	_____	_____
SPENCER	_____	_____	_____	_____
BAKER	_____	_____	_____	_____
MORRIS	_____	_____	_____	_____

Attest:

Chris McKlarney, County Administrator