

RESOLUTION NO. 2555

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF WILSONVILLE AUTHORIZING GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE USE OF CITY FUNDS FOR UTILITY BILL PAYING ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS, Wilsonville Community Sharing, an Oregon non-profit corporation, has been providing community outreach services, including but not limited to utility bill-paying assistance for those in need; and

WHEREAS, since fiscal year 2010-11 the City has provided both a general purpose grant and a separate renter's utility bill-paying assistance grant, collectively referred to as "Grant"; and

WHEREAS, the City has included the Grant within the City Manager's budget which is subject to review by the Budget Committee and adoption by City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Grant totaling \$48,000 is included in the FY 2015-16 budget and is composed of \$32,000 for the general purpose portion and \$16,000 for the renter's utility bill-paying assistance portion; and

WHEREAS, the renter's utility bill-paying assistance portion was to cease following a reduction in the Portland-area unemployment rate below 7%; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that the need for assistance persists and includes both homeowners and renters; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to have guidelines that govern the use of City funds for the provision of utility bill paying assistance;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF WILSONVILLE RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. Wilsonville Community Sharing will use the guidelines included in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated by reference as fully set forth herein, for the use of City funds to provide utility bill paying assistance to both homeowners and renters within the City limits of Wilsonville.
2. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED by the Wilsonville City Council at a regular meeting thereof this 2nd day of November, 2015, and filed with the Wilsonville City Recorder this date.

Tim Knapp, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sandra C. King, MMC, City Recorder

SUMMARY OF VOTES:

Mayor Knapp	Yes
Council President Starr	Excused
Councilor Fitzgerald	Yes
Councilor Lehan	Yes
Councilor Stevens	Excused

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Wilsonville Community Sharing Utility Bill Paying Assistance Guidelines

Wilsonville Community Sharing Guidelines for the use of City funds for the Utility-Bill Paying Assistance Program

The Wilsonville City Council will designate City funds to be used by Wilsonville Community Sharing (WCS) for utility bill-paying assistance via Resolution. WCS may augment these funds from other sources. However, the use of City funds for utility bill-paying assistance shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Utility bill-paying assistance is available for the following utilities:
 - Utilities that provide heat
 - Utilities that provide electricity
 - City of Wilsonville combined utility bill
- Each client shall have an in-person in-take appointment with WCS.
- The client must live within the City limits of Wilsonville, as verified by address on utility bills and income documents.
- The reason for bill-paying assistance must be stated by the client to WCS staff.
- Utility bills for which the client is requesting bill-paying assistance must be original and presented to WCS staff at the time of in-take appointment.
- For assistance with heat and/or electric utilities, client must demonstrate evidence of working with Clackamas County Social Services or Washington County Community Action, by providing to WCS staff the name, phone number and dates of contact with the staff person with whom they have worked.
- Bill-paying assistance from City funds for utilities that provide heat and/or electricity (PGE & NW Natural, etc.) shall be after the client either received, or made a good faith effort to receive, any assistance granted through other organizations, such as Clackamas County Social Services or Community Action in Washington County. In the event no assistance was granted, WCS will evaluate on a case-by-case basis as to the reason, but the lack of assistance from another organization will not disqualify a client from receiving bill-paying assistance through this program.
- WCS will follow Clackamas County's Social Services income guidelines for eligibility:
 - 60% of State median income by household size; for use in Federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 - Sept 30)
 - Income eligibility is based on the total gross household income received by all adults age 18 and over living at the home at the time of application.
 - Gross income is before taxes and deductions.
- WCS will follow Clackamas County's income eligibility determination:
 - Income for the 30 days prior to the application is verified for the purpose of determining income eligibility.

- Income eligibility can also be demonstrated by the client through the verification of a major financial crisis or set-back that has negatively impacted the client’s financial situation, thereby impacting their ability to pay the full amount of their utility bill(s). In such cases, the financial crisis or set –back must demonstrably detract from their income in an amount that would make them fall within the income eligibility guidelines.
- WCS will contact Clackamas County Social Services each August or September to verify and update, as necessary, income guidelines and income eligibility determination. WCS will remain consistent, on an annual basis, with Clackamas County Social Services in these areas.
- Bill-paying assistance for utilities is capped as follows:
 - At total \$300 per the City’s fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), per household, for all utilities.
 - If bill-paying assistance is requested for the City of Wilsonville’s combined utility bill, this amount shall be capped at \$150 per the City’s fiscal year, per household.
 - These caps may be adjusted as the Wilsonville City Council determines through Resolution.
- WCS will verify with the utilities the amount owed by the client.
- WCS will pay the utilities directly. No funds will be disbursed to the client. For bill-paying assistance for the City of Wilsonville combined utility bill, no funds will be disbursed; WCS staff will contact the City and the City will adjust the client’s bill accordingly.
- WCS staff shall make a good faith effort to avoid actual or perceived conflict of interest in administering the bill-paying assistance program, meaning that WCS staff will recuse themselves from determining eligibility and award amount for bill-paying assistance to their family members and friends, other WCS staff, and city of Wilsonville staff; and instead convene a panel of the WCS Board Chair and City Finance Director, or their designees, to determine eligibility and bill-paying assistance amount, following the above guidelines.
- WCS shall maintain a generalized list of clients awarded bill-paying assistance, in order to provide information annually to the City’s Finance Department. This list shall consist of the client’s initials (not name), address, the amount of the assistance awarded and the utilities covered by the assistance. This information will be kept confidential and will be used for statistical purposes. WCS will provide this information annually by September 1 of each year, covering the previous fiscal year period of July 1 through June 30.
