

# Toward Tomorrow

CITY OF NORMAN  
Spring 2022 Proposition



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Advanced Water Metering [View a video by clicking here](#)

### **Q: What is advanced water metering?**

A: Advanced water metering is otherwise known as smart metering and a lot of folks will understand that from the standpoint that OG&E went to smart electric meters years ago. Basically, what it means is that instead of manually reading the meter – pulling the lid off of the water meter, an individual looking at it – it is a transmission of the data that is in the water meter about the consumption that is being used and transmitting that information to basically a cellular phone tower, and then it transmits to the reading equipment.

*-Anthony Francisco, Finance Director*

### **Q: How are meters currently read?**

A: Current practice now is we have about forty-one thousand meters and the majority of those are read manually by our employees. So they'll, that means you have an employee that physically goes out removes a meter lid, looks at the number on the meter, records that into an electronic device and does that for about 400 meters per day. So we have to do that for all meters each month for billing. So some of the challenges that you can see on that is whether or not you have employees available to do that due to illness or employee turnover; weather conditions could also impact that. The other challenges you might have is those are meters that are located in the ground so they could be covered up by mud, water, and then that takes time for people to go out and clean those off. So, with this new system, we would set up, you would have the same meter technology, but we would have that electronic device on it to where it will automatically do those things for us. So that will eliminate some of those challenges that we have now, with current employees and being able to go read those and free those employees to do higher value tasks for City. Make us a little bit more efficient.

*-Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer*

### **Q: What is an estimated water bill?**

A: When a bill is estimated, that means that no one did actually go out and read the meter. So the consumption that has been used over the past month is estimated. It is

estimated based on past consumption in an average month for that same meter. Basically speaking, the estimations are usually pretty accurate. To the extent that a customer's consumption is fairly consistent over time, then the estimation should be fairly accurate. But if there is some anomaly caused by really cold weather or really hot weather, this year versus last year, or this month versus last month, that causes the consumption to go way up in a given month or way down in a given month based on the average consumption at that meter, then the estimation is going to be off. It's usually not a problem when the estimation is within 10 or 20 percent, folks usually don't notice. But when the estimation is off by 30, 40, 50 percent, the customer notices on their bill or on their next bill when it's actually read and the consumption is caught up. That's what results in a really high bill or really low bill, when the estimation gets caught up.

*-Anthony Francisco, Finance Director*

**Q: How long would meter replacement take?**

A: We will do it over time. You can't just in a day go out and replace 40 thousand meters. It will take over a year to replace all of the meters. The time that it will take depends on our availability, as far as to replace all of those meters, but to the extent that the water rate passes and we would have funds available to replace all the meters, then it just becomes a mechanical question of how quickly meters can be received and put into the ground. And we think that the shortest time period will be about 18 months.

*-Anthony Francisco, Finance Director*

**Q: What are some benefits of Advanced Water Metering?**

A: Now what they'll be able to see is, how am I using water? And how do I want to use that water better? Some customers may not be interested in that, but we do have a lot of customers and businesses that will be able to look at that and say I'm using a lot of water here. I can make these changes and reduce my water usage which is therefore reducing costs out of my pocket. And then also customers will be able to configure the system to where it may notify them if they want to set a budget for how much their water usage is or look at high usage control or Leak Detection. So they could set it up to where if it's running in the middle of the night and they know they shouldn't be using water in the middle night, it'll notify them so they can address those leaks and reduce their monthly bill.

*-Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer*

Q: How does this further help conservation and sustainability efforts?

A: Right now, we only get data for water usage on what somebody does for a whole month. This will provide us information on an hourly basis so we can better track how much water we're putting into the system on a day and how much water got used that same day. So to give her a better accounting effort for our water conservation. And then it really is a greener way for us to do this because now we're not rolling trucks to

go look at meters or go read Meters. So we'll be able to have that be transmitted wirelessly and just less greenhouse gas emissions.

*-Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer*

**Q: What happens if the vote does not pass?**

A: We still feel that the advanced water metering project is something that the city needs. The existing meters for our city are aged and industry standards say you replace those on a 15 to 20 or type replacement program, which we haven't currently been doing. So we will need to do that and it makes sense for us to do it and bring it up to current industry standards by doing this advanced program.

*Additional information:*

[Click here to read more FAQs and access articles regarding the safety of Advanced Water Meters.](#)