



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Borough of Chambersburg

*A full service municipality in Franklin County celebrating over 65 years of consumer owned natural gas service over 120 years of community electric and a regional wastewater, water, storm sewer and municipal solid waste utility*

## CHAMBERSBURG ISSUED ESTIMATED UTILITY BILLS IN APRIL 2020

**Chambersburg, Pennsylvania** – Due to the onset of the COVID-19 Health Crisis, Town Council approved estimated utility billing for customer invoices issued in April 2020. These bills are accurate and were based upon a realistic individual estimation of consumption for each utility account. In the past, from time to time, circumstances have forced individual accounts to be estimated. This was the first time that all utility accounts were issued estimated invoices simultaneously.

**On Monday, April 27, Town Council approved a change to the system, and beginning in May 2020, most utility invoices will return to being calculated by actual utility consumption rather than an estimation.**

“Over the last few weeks,” explained Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill, “Borough employees have developed a protocol for safely reading most of the water, electric, and natural gas meters throughout the Borough.”

Meter readers currently retrieve consumption information, throughout the Borough system, using hand held computer devices that require the meter reader to be near the meter device. In some systems, meter data is transmitted through radio waves or the internet to billing clerks. Chambersburg does not yet have such a system installed, but hopes to have one over the next few years.

“We have a large number of older buildings throughout our community,” explained Stonehill, “and we have meters in basements, crawl spaces, in vaults, and in some unusual spots. Sometimes moving the meter is expensive or impractical for the customer. Unfortunately, we cannot ask our personnel to go crawling through a customer’s private interior spaces to read a utility meter during this health crisis.”

Utility meters that are inaccessible, hard to reach, or require physical interaction with customers will continue to be estimated going forward. It is assumed that will be about 20% of all utility meters although no definitive list of customers with inaccessible meters currently exists.

The Borough indicated that they will compile a list on a case-by-case basis over the next month and customers who continue to get estimated utility invoices will be notified with a letter explaining the reason.

Customers with estimated utility consumption in April 2020, but actual consumption measured in May 2020, will be reconciled so their accounts will be accurate once again. The reconciliation process will follow standard reconciliation rules previously established by the Borough. Town Council approved the reconciliation with the directive to estimate utility invoices when approved on March 30, 2020.

“We hope that most customers understand the complexity of this process and the need to keep our employees safe during this health crisis,” explained Stonehill. “We want to provide our utility customers with accurate bills, but not at the expense of employee safety.”

The Borough of Chambersburg voluntarily suspended utility disconnections in March 2020. The Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC) adopted similar measures recently, but most of Chambersburg’s utilities do not fall under PUC regulations. That prohibition on disconnection will continue throughout May 2020.

Chambersburg is unique in that it is the only municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to operate most public utilities including electricity, water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, natural gas, and sanitation. “No other Borough is as heavily involved in the delivery of utilities as the Borough of Chambersburg,” explained Stonehill. “During this crisis, it was imperative that the Borough make plans to address the needs and challenges of the community.”

If customers have any questions about Chambersburg’s utility bills, customers should call Customer Service at (717) 264-5151 or by email at [customerservicegroup@chambersburgpa.gov](mailto:customerservicegroup@chambersburgpa.gov). Currently Customer Service is best contacted by phone or email as Borough buildings are not accessible to unescorted citizens during the COVID-19 health crisis.