

August 14, 2025

To The Three Forks City Ordinance Committee

I am writing this letter in reference to your proposal on renters water/sewer bill, being paid by the landlords.. Unfortunately, I have a prior commitment and can't attend..

I am a 22 year Navy (Vietnam) Veteran.. After my military service, my wife and I moved back home to the Three Forks/Willow Creek area and have lived here for the past 35+ years (16 years at our present renting location).. My family has lived here since the early 1800's. They were one of the first homesteaders in the valley.. They have had numerous businesses and ranches in the area and some still do.. I am related to hundreds of people here and hundreds more, buried in the cemeteries.. My roots are deep in this community..

I tell you this, so you fully understand my position..

Around 65% of the Three Forks community are elderly and retired.. Many are on fixed incomes and renting, as we are.. Over the past 16 years, my lot rent has increased, over 300%, largely because of your city taxes and levies.. You just raised my water/sewer by \$15 a month.. Now this???

Landlords will be forced to raise the rent by \$25-\$50 a month, over and above the water/sewer bill, to pay for their administrative costs..

You will be forcing out the people, who helped build this community.. Why?? Is it because you don't care about the renters?? Or, you'd rather shaft the people who have paid their water/sewer bill "on time every month" for 35 years or more, than pursue those that don't?? Or is this the way they do it in California?? Hummm..

I have an idea, go after the deadbeats who don't pay their bill on time, Renters and Owners alike.. I shouldn't have to pay for their irresponsibility???

I am a born and raised Montanan and proud of it, but I'm getting less and less proud of the city Three Forks (my home for the past 35 years). We are 80 years old and now we're having to contemplate moving away, because it is getting too expensive to live here.. SAD!!

PLEASE DON'T PASS THAT ORDINANCE

Respectfully,



Kenneth W. Allen, 320 W. Front Street

From: Janet WOOLEVER <woolever1@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 8:36 PM
To: mayor@threeforksmontan.us; Kelly Smith; cturner@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: Kelly Bugland; Lynnette VanLuchene
Subject: Water bill ordinance changes

Hello Randy, Kelly, Crystal and Ordinance Committee Members,

I have read the agenda of the upcoming ordinance meeting, but am unable to attend and wanted to give my input on the potential changes because I do have a rental in Three Forks. First, I want to thank Crystal for taking my call last week and giving me an explanation of why the possible changes are being requested.

I understand the hours spent on billing for city water accounts may seem like a lot and some ongoing issues come with challenges whether with changes in renters or home ownership. I'm sure that it is a tedious part of the job. I wonder if software specific for utilities could be purchased that would help make time spent more streamlined to help the staff?

I personally believe that it is the Cities responsibility to bill each individual water user for the amount that they use and receive payment from that water user for the cost of their usage. To me, it makes more sense for the tenant to maintain or adjust their own usage according to their personal budget. It is a renters responsibility to pay their bills. Making monthly payments in their name helps them establish good credit. Missed payments can be reported toward the tenant, if necessary, for very delinquent accounts. Even though landlords are ultimately responsible for non payments, I still don't think that it is the landlords responsibility to manage tenants water usage. Trying to figure out average water usage as part of the rent will force landlords to increase rents to cover the additional costs. I don't think guesstimating is fair or responsible. Even if water bills are mailed directly to the tenants address it would be in the landlords name. Would a tenant really feel the need to pay it if it wasn't in their name?

I had the Bozeman experience when my son rented while at MSU. The landlord cut off all spigots so that the tenants couldn't use water except in the kitchen and bathrooms. Watching and controlling the tenant water usage was uncalled for. Three Forks is the small town where I grew up and live part-time. Let's not pit landlord against tenant over water usage. Keep Renters responsible and keep billing them directly, please.

Thank you for your time.

Janet Burwell Woolever

From: Carrie R. <carrieroy1984@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 1:31 PM
To: ksmith@threeforksmontana.us; cturner@threeforksmontana.us;
mayor@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: Kelly Bugland
Subject: Amending water ordinance #9-1-3

To whom it may concern-
My name is Carrie Roy and me and my husband Steve Roy are long term renters from KTB - Property Management. We do not support an amendment to ordinance 9-1-3 because inevitably our expenses would rise even more with the landlord having to estimate on our water/sewer bill, instead of being based solely on our usage. This comes after the city already implemented an increase as of recently. This will create a financial burden for us as renters. Thank you for your consideration.
Carrie Roy

Sent from my iPhone

From: Steve Roy <sroy84041@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 1:31 PM
To: ksmith@threeforksmontana.us; cturner@threeforksmontana.us;
mayor@threeforksmontana.us; ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com
Subject: City ordinance 9-1-3

To whom it may concern,

My name is Steve Roy. My wife and I, Carrie Roy are long time renters from KTB property management. We do not support an amendment to ordinance 9-1-3 because inevitably our expenses would rise even more with the landlord having to estimate on our water/sewer bill, instead of being based solely on our usage. This comes after the city already implemented an increase as of recently. This will create a financial burden for us as renters. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Kelly Bugland <ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Crystal Turner; Kelly Smith; Wally Ziegler
Cc: Dan Dellinger
Subject: Fwd: Ordinance amendment

Dan is having troubles getting his email to be sent.

I hope by me forwarding it and cc him on it, that it is acceptable.

Sent from iPhone
Kelly Cooper Bugland
Montana licensed property manager
KTB Property Management LLC
Po Box 535
Three Forks, MT 59752
406-285-6946

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dan Dellinger <elkhuntermt43@yahoo.com>
Date: September 3, 2025 at 3:25:55 PM MDT
To: cityhall@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com
Subject: Ordinance amendment

Sent from my iPhone
To whom it concerns;

I am writing this email in regards to the issue of the city amending ordinance #9-1-3. If I understand the change correctly the city wants to make the landowner totally responsible for the monthly water and sewer bill and require the owner to collect the monthly bill from the tenant. We have lived in our home for almost 12 years, it is a duplex and when we moved in the water/sewer was part of our monthly rent. Then about 2 years ago the city decided to make the landowner put a meter on both of the units and that the tenant was required to be responsible for the bill. This added to our monthly cost for the rental the monthly cost for water/sewer approximately \$100. Now the city wants to change the ordinance requiring the landowner to be responsible for the monthly water/sewer costs. And the only way the owner can do that is to estimate the monthly bill and would have to ask the tenant for the estimated cost, which I'm sure they would have to charge a higher estimates to insure they are covered. This would add to our monthly rent and unit expenses and as we are both on fixed incomes (SSN and state retirement TV) this greatly effects our struggle to make ends meet.

For the city saying that they would save “5 to 7 staff hours” per month, you need to take into consideration how much 5 to 7 hours wages compare to the cost to all the renters/landlords within the city this would effect. I don’t really see the comparison unless the staff is paid a huge hourly wage (which I really doubt).

This proposal will affect our monthly expenses and our livelihood tremendously. Our rent has been impacted already by the cost of living, property taxes and now the city thinking savings a few hours wages is beneficial to city residents, I don’t think so.

Sincerely

Dan and Judy Dellinger

From: Christopher Miller <cmiller2272@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:07 PM
To: mayor@threeforksmontana.us; ksmith@threeforksmontana.us;
cturner@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com
Subject: Concern Regarding Proposed Amendment to Ordinance #9-1-3 03SEP2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to express my concern regarding the proposed amendment to Ordinance #9-1-3, which would remove tenant references and require all water utility accounts to remain in the property owner's name. While I understand the intent to streamline administrative processes and reduce financial liability for the city, I urge you to consider the unintended consequences this change may have on families like mine.

We moved back to and have lived in Three Forks for over 4 years and have grown deeply attached to the Gallatin Valley, and this small little town. We have had several generations grow up here and have roots all over the Valley. However, the rising cost of living has made it increasingly difficult to stay afloat financially. If this ordinance is amended as proposed, landlords may be forced to raise rent to cover fluctuating utility costs—costs that tenants currently manage directly and responsibly.

This shift would increase our monthly expenses, making it harder to save for a future home, pay down student loans, and continue living in the community we love. While our landlords have been generous and fair, they too would need to protect themselves from unpredictable utility usage, likely resulting in rent hikes that exceed actual consumption.

We appreciate the city's efforts to improve efficiency, but we ask that you weigh those benefits against the real impact on residents who are already stretched thin. A change like this could unintentionally price out young families and long-term renters who contribute meaningfully to the fabric of this town. Is the minuscule amount of time of 5-7 hours really worth so many people's peace of mind? Is there an automation tool or program that could be used by the workers to help with their workload, that could potentially save even more money or time, been looked into before immediately pushing this on to the people of Three Forks?

Thank you for your time and consideration. We hope our concerns will be part of the broader discussion and that any decision made will reflect the diverse needs of the community.

Sincerely,
Christopher Miller
302 2nd AVE East Three Forks, MT, 59752
[406-920-9230]

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Kelly Smith

From: Ashley DeHaan <ashleydehaan96@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2025 1:02 PM
To: ksmith@threeforksmontana.us; mayor@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: Ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com
Subject: Against Ordinance #9-1-3

In regards to the meeting being held for ordinance #9-1-3 to remove tenant accounts on water/sewer usage, I strongly disagree with the changes. We as a household are very cautious on our usages for our monthly budgets. Changing this would make rent go up which is already a bit outrageous as it is anymore and with not knowing the exact usage and only "estimating" the charges for landlords to charge the tenants isn't fair to tenants who don't use as much as others and who are water savvy and those of us who have been doing/paying our personal water/sewer bills have to suffer because of it. We are strongly against these changes!

Thanks.

Ashley DeHaan

From: Roxi McDermott <Roxi.McDermott@ourbank.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 8:23 AM
To: Crystal Turner
Subject: FW: Letter for the city meeting -EXTERNAL

Hi Crystal,

Kim sent this to me yesterday. I thought you should have it before the meeting tonight.

Thank you

Roxi

From: Kim Fink <kimjofink@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:35 PM
To: Roxi McDermott <Roxi.McDermott@ourbank.com>
Subject: Fwd: Letter for the city meeting -EXTERNAL

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kim Fink** <kimjofink@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2025 at 9:33 PM
Subject: Letter for the city meeting
To: <Roximcdermott@gmail.com>

Hi Roxi,

I would appreciate you taking this to the meeting about the water bills being transferred to the owner of the property.

I am a landlord myself and represent for a property that was my dad's. Putting the water bill as the responsibility of the landlord puts a situation in the landlord's hands. Why? Because in the summer the water bill varies so much. How is a landlord supposed to set a monthly rent for their tenant with a fluctuating water bill? It's not possible. It's like the power bill, there is a reason the tenant puts it in their name. These types of utility bills need to be in the tenants name because they are not the same amount every

month. The rent is the same amount every month. How would a landlord be able to get this amount from the tenant? Let's help adults be adults and make them accountable for their water bill. I do not support putting the water bill into the landlord's name.

thanks for listening

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Have a Great Day! ~ Kim Kanta Fink :)

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From: Joe McDonald <jemcdonaldjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 12:47 PM
To: mayor@threeforksmontana.us; ksmith@threeforksmontana.us;
cturner@threeforksmontana.us
Cc: ktbpropertymanagement@gmail.com; Paula McDonald
Subject: Water Department Changes

Hello All,

We wanted to take the opportunity to express how we feel about the proposed changes regarding the landlord/tenant water bill policy.

When we started renting where we have lived for the past several years our water was included in our rent. Several years later the city changed the policy so water meters would be installed for every line used so that meant our monthly expenses now included a water bill of approximately \$100 that was no longer included with our rent. Very recently there was an increase in our water bill so that now takes us to about \$115 each month. If our water bill returns to the landlord there is no way to include an exact usage amount in our lease each year. Our landlord will need to estimate our water usage and I would assume that would be on a high end of \$150-\$200 a month to ensure the water bill is completely covered. I understand you have no control over a lease between a landlord and tenants, however, we need you to realize how these changes affect a large number of renters in Three Forks. It doesn't seem like the change should be that problematic because it just changes who we are paying for the water. If our water changes \$35-\$85 a month that is a huge burden for all of us renters who commute for work every day. If this policy changes again in 6-12 months our rent won't go back down but we will have the return of a high water bill.

Years ago we chose Three Forks because it's a great small town close to a lot of wonderful things Montana has to offer. The cost of living made it possible to live here and work in Bozeman. At the moment the cost of living isn't very far off from Bozeman especially if people don't have to pay to commute. In my opinion if this change is made right now there will be a lot of people who will seriously look for other options and even worse, new families and retirement aged individuals will keep looking for where they will settle down and miss out on amazing people, an amazing school and experiences that Three Forks has to offer. At the very least this needs to be tabled for 6 months and come up with a better plan of action.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Have a great day.

Joe & Paula McDonald

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