

EMERGENCY ORDER No. 20-7 OF THE OFFICIAL AUTHORITY
OF THE COUNTY OF PINELLAS
PURSUANT TO
RESOLUTION NO. 20-16, AS EXTENDED

WHEREAS, in response to the emergence of a novel coronavirus and the respiratory disease it causes (“COVID-19”), the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic that constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern; and

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-51, declaring that appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Florida are necessary, and accordingly the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer declared that a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-52 declaring a State of Emergency for the state of Florida in furtherance of efforts to respond to and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 throughout the state, and most recently extended this State of Emergency in Executive Order Number 20-166; and

WHEREAS, since that time, the Governor has found it necessary and appropriate to issue additional Executive Orders to slow the spread of COVID-19, and has modified existing restrictions to implement a phased re-opening process, and has provided parameters for the conduct of permitted business operations, directed compliance with health and safety practices as established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and elaborated other restrictions and modifications to previous orders; and

WHEREAS, in order to fully and effectively respond to the developing threats posed by the novel coronavirus and its associated disease (COVID-19), and in coordination with ongoing emergency actions by the state and federal governments, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (Board) passed Resolution 20-16 declaring a local state of emergency (LSE) in Pinellas County (Resolution), and subsequently such extensions and orders as have been deemed necessary have been issued pursuant thereto; and

WHEREAS, the LSE is intended to enable the County to effectively respond to the ongoing and evolving public health threat posed by COVID-19, which continues to pose a threat throughout Pinellas County, including by taking measures to mitigate and slow the spread of the virus; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of Pinellas County to take proactive measures to support the public health and safety of the community; and

WHEREAS, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) Department suspended normal protocols for nonpayment of bills, including suspension of water service shutoffs, in order to ensure customers had access to clean water in the interest of public health; and

WHEREAS, in order to assist customers affected by the COVID-19 emergency and to prevent risks to the public that could result from service terminations called for by certain billing procedures, the safety of persons in Pinellas County will be aided by the establishment of extended payment plans for accounts as set forth herein; and

WHEREAS, Section 252.38(3)(a)5, Florida Statutes, provides authority for a political subdivision such as Pinellas County to exercise emergency powers; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to §252.38(1), Florida Statutes, and Pinellas County Charter section 2.04 (k), the County has jurisdictional authority over the entire county for emergency management purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE, in accordance with Resolution No. 20-16, as extended and supplemented by other emergency actions, I now order, effective at 6:00 a.m. on July 27, 2020:

1. That the Pinellas County Utilities Department, in addition to implementing other provisions of the normally applicable policies for utility customer accounts, is authorized to develop and implement payment plans for the repayment of accounts with past due bills as of August 1, 2020, which will be payable over six bimonthly billing periods, provided that the eligible accounts were impacted by the Department's procedural changes in response to COVID-19, and are limited to the terms and durations permitted by this order and established by the Department.

Ordered this 23rd day of July, 2020 at

9:23 a.m./p.m.



County Administrator, or successor,
as Official Authority pursuant to Resolution 20-16

APPROVED AS TO FORM

By:


Office of the County Attorney