



## News Release

Thursday, December 28, 2023  
For Immediate Release

# Two City relief measures supported for those affected by tornado

**CLARKSVILLE, Tenn.** – In special called session Thursday afternoon, the Clarksville City Council approved, on the first of two readings, two measures aimed at providing some relief for those residents and property owners victimized by the tornado of Dec. 9, 2023.

One of the measures is an ordinance authorizing the City of Clarksville Gas & Water Department to forgive payment for water leaks that stemmed from tornado structural damage.

The second ordinance is to authorize the City of Clarksville Building & Codes Department to waive permit fees for customers suffering a total loss or damage to structures as a result of the tornado.

Clarksville Mayor Joe Pitts declared a State of Emergency in the City of Clarksville shortly after the tornado struck in areas of north Clarksville.

“Our efforts in the City to provide meaningful relief to those Clarksvillians affected by the devastating tornado of Dec. 9 are ongoing, addressing a wide range of daily citizen impacts which we can control. These ordinances represent two ways we can take immediate action,” said Mayor Pitts.

“I appreciate the City Council’s support of these ordinances, as we all work together, united, to get our City back on its feet and moving forward confidently,” he said.

### Gas & Water Ordinance

After the tornado, the Gas & Water Department found that many of its customers who suffered structural damage to residences and/or businesses also experienced damaged water service piping beyond the water meter, causing significant water leakage that subsequently caused, or which will cause, increased water bills.

In cases of natural disasters, the language of Title 13, Section 13-302 of the City of Clarksville Code of Ordinances, empowers the Mayor of the City of Clarksville to authorize the General Manager of the Gas & Water Department “to waive any and all service fees or penalties, and to dispense with the requirement of payment of a security deposit, and to allow the payment of any bills due for service through installment payments, and to suspend the deactivation of accounts or termination of services, for a reasonable period of time to be determined by the Mayor, irrespective of any error made by the department, for customers who provide proof of substantial damages or harm to their real or personal property, or significant interruption of their business, due to (in this case) natural or made-made disaster ... .”

The Gas & Water Department would calculate consumption and adjust for average daily usage, from the previous date that an associated water meter was read, until the date a meter was turned off, and adjust for any leakage, also adjusting associated sewer charges, up to 60 days from the date of the tornado.

“Our thoughts and prayers remain with the members of our Clarksville family who have suffered and lost so much recently,” said Mark Riggins, Clarksville Gas & Water General Manager. “I am very thankful for the support of Mayor Pitts and the City Council in their approval of this ordinance allowing us to further help our friends and neighbors in their recovery process after being affected by the devastating tornado in north Clarksville.

“We will continue to work with customers to adjust their bills, waive fees and expediently process and address customer service requests for those who were affected,” Riggins said.

### **Building & Codes Ordinance**

The City Building & Codes Department found after the tornado that many of its customers who suffered structural damage to residences and/or businesses will require City building and safety inspection permits.

For customers who provide proof of substantial damages or harm to their real or personal property due to the tornado, the Building & Codes Department wishes to waive the fees related to building permits and safety inspection permits within 180 days from the date of the tornado, pending final approval of the ordinance.

“Our hearts go out to those affected by the tornado on Dec. 9. We understand this will be a long and difficult recovery process, and we are committed to assist in returning a sense of normalcy to our neighbors affected by the storm as quickly as possible,” said Justin Crosby, Interim Director of Clarksville Building & Codes.

“Our administrative staff continues to provide quick assistance to our customers, with accelerated permitting and inspection scheduling, and our building inspectors expedite same-day inspections,” Crosby said.