

**“This isn’t about raising rates or changing policy — it’s about making sure the Village actually collects what it’s already owed.”**

**“Right now, when bills go unpaid, the system breaks down. This fix makes responsibility clear and enforceable.”**

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## **KEY POINTS TO HIT**

### **1. This is already the law — we’re clarifying it**

“Property owners are already responsible under our ordinance and state law. This just removes ambiguity and closes gaps that are being exploited.”

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### **2. This protects the Village financially**

“Unpaid utility bills don’t disappear — they get absorbed by the system or other ratepayers.”

“This helps prevent shifting costs onto residents who *are* paying their bills.”

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### **3. Landlords still have an option — but it has to be done right**

“If a landlord wants the tenant to be responsible, they still can — they just have to follow the rules consistently.”

“What we’re eliminating is partial compliance or outdated paperwork being used to avoid payment.”

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### **4. This is about accountability, not punishment**

“This doesn’t target landlords — it ensures someone accountable is always responsible for the bill.”

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### **5. Every other utility works this way**

“This aligns with how utilities are handled across Michigan — ultimately tied to the property.”

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## **EXPECTED LANDLORD PUSHBACK (AND HOW TO HANDLE IT)**

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## **Pushback #1:**

**“Why should I be responsible for a tenant’s bill?”**

### **Response:**

“Because the service is tied to your property, not just the person living there.”

“You control who rents your property, your lease terms, and your deposits. The Village doesn’t.”

“This policy ensures the Village isn’t put in the position of chasing tenants who have already moved.”

## **Pushback #2:**

**“This isn’t fair — I can’t control if a tenant pays.”**

### **Response:**

“You can’t control it completely, but you can manage it — through deposits, lease terms, and screening.”

“The Village doesn’t have that ability. That’s why the responsibility ultimately rests with the property.”

## **Pushback #3:**

**“You’re forcing landlords to act as collection agents.”**

### **Response:**

“No — we’re holding property owners accountable for services provided to their property.”

“How you structure your lease or deposits is up to you. This just ensures the bill gets paid.”

## **Pushback #4:**

**“Other places don’t do this.”**

### **Response:**

“Actually, most municipalities in Michigan have similar authority — especially when it comes to placing unpaid bills on the tax roll.”

## **Pushback #5:**

**“This will hurt rental housing / increase rents. “Response:**

“This doesn’t change the cost of water — it ensures existing costs are paid.”

“If anything, it stabilizes the system so rates don’t have to increase for everyone else.”

## **STRATEGIC LINES**

“The real question is — who is ultimately responsible when no one pays?”

When things get emotional:

“We’re not changing who *can* pay — we’re making sure the Village isn’t left holding the bill.”

When someone hesitates:

“If we don’t do this, the cost doesn’t disappear — it shifts to taxpayers.”

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“This is a practical fix to a real problem. It keeps us aligned with state law, protects the Village financially, and ensures fairness for the residents who are already paying their bills.”

“At the end of the day, this is about accountability and protecting the community.”