



Citizens Want to Know

PRESSURIZED IRRIGATION METERING PROJECT

Why are you taking away my hose bibb, filter, and/or shutoff valve and not replacing it!?

The Long Answer:

When American Fork City installed the pressurized irrigation (PI) system in 2008, the City also installed a utility box on every property using the PI system. These boxes can be found in the front yards of businesses or residences near the sidewalk. This box was meant to house a shutoff valve and a meter, should the City ever decide to add a meter.



AMERICAN FORK

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In 2019 the State legislature passed S.B. 52, requiring cities to meter secondary water, also called pressurized irrigation, water. American Fork is undergoing this meter installation project to comply with the State mandate.

Back in 2008 the City had no immediate plans for installing a meter, so decided to use the extra space in the City's utility box to add a hose bibb as an added convenience for residents. The goal was to help properties that did not yet have a sprinkler system and had to hand water. At the time the City directed residents that the utility box was for City purposes, and they should plan to add their own utility box further down the line where they can house a filter, shutoff valve, and hose bibb for their property. In fact, in 2008 American Fork City partnered with businesses like BJs Plumbing and Home Depot to have them put together a utility box kit for residents that included the box, lid, filter, shutoff valves, and related connections that residents could purchase and add to their PI systems down the line from the City's utility box. Many homes did just that. Others, however, decided to not install these items, or decided to use the existing space in the city's utility box to install these items. We understand that there may have been a variety of reasons, whether intentional or unintentional, that led to people using the City's utility box beyond its intended purpose. The installation of extra items in the City's utility box does complicate our PI meter installation currently underway.

Now that the City is beginning installation of PI meters on existing connections, we understand the frustration by some residents who may have grown accustomed to using the hose bibb in the City's utility box. Some residents may have even added their filter in the City box as well. With almost 14 years passing since the City installed these boxes, it's easy to get used to their current set up. While the City is proud that we had the forethought to put this utility box in for a future meter, we now have the uncomfortable responsibility to take back the use of our utility boxes for its original purpose. Unfortunately, the meter being installed takes up the whole box and doesn't allow for other features to remain.

The new meters will include a transmitter that will be connected to the lid, allowing us to wirelessly read the meters. Using a transmitter will save the City significant labor costs year after year to read meters. Additionally, these transmitters will allow residents to easily see their own usage. However, because the transmitter is connected to the lid there is a greater chance of damaging this expensive device by opening and shutting it. For that reason, we are asking residents to not open the City's utility box once the meter is installed. We understand it may be difficult for residents who have had freedom to access and use that box in the past to now be asked to not even open it up. Please know that we are doing that to reduce the risk of damaging expensive equipment.

The City intentionally installed the utility box so that at a later time we could add meters in a standardized and economical way. For every home it's the same box in roughly the same location, for the same purpose: a meter. The overall cost to install these meters is relatively low compared to what other cities will have to do. The cost of our PI meter project is estimated to be around \$10-\$12 million, which may seem like a lot. But for many cities, in addition to adding a meter they also must add/replace the utility box and then restore landscaping around the box. Those add significant costs to the overall project. Something American Fork does not have to deal with. With our project we can use the existing box and most all residents will not see any impact to their yard. One of the only variables for American Fork are the components that a resident may have added to the City utility box or have grown used to using in the box.

American Fork City cannot replace the city's hose bibb or resident's filters later in the line because we feel that is excessively costly and inequitable to our residents. Considering that the original intent of the box was for a future meter, the City feels that installing another box and/or bibb down the line would be inequitable to the many residents who already installed their own utility box/bibb at their own expense. Those residents paid for that additional utility box, filter, shutoff valve, and bibb (or some combination of those items) out of their own pocket as they were instructed to do in 2008. Having the City install additional boxes and/or bibbs for every resident who requests it would add significant costs to the project. Everyone's front yard is designed and landscaped differently. Additionally, there is no telling just how a resident decided to set up their sprinkler system either. Not only would the installation and landscape restoration costs be exorbitant if the City undertook to give residents another box/bibb, but the liability to the City of working on residential sprinkler systems in unknown conditions would be significant. All these added costs would exceed any grants the City would ever hope to get, meaning the additional costs would be borne by the residents as a whole, including the residents who already put in their own boxes and bibbs. We feel this approach is unnecessary, overly costly, and inequitable to all residents.

American Fork City understands that some residents may have misunderstood or never known the purpose and ownership of the City's utility box. We also know that in 2008 some residents may have hired their own contractor to connect to the City's new PI lines; and that those contractors may have been the ones who incorrectly moved the filters into the City's boxes. For those residents we understand why you would feel frustrated or disagree with what seems like a reduction without compensation. We hope this article has helped shed some light and broaden some understanding as to the original intent and purpose of these P.I. utility boxes and why the City is removing everything from the boxes without installing them elsewhere. You can learn more about the project by visiting americanfork.gov/PImeters