



City of Grand Forks

Staff Report

Committee of the Whole – April 27, 2026

City Council – May 4, 2026

**APPROVED & ACCEPTED**  
by City Council

05/04/2026

*Maureen Storstad*  
Maureen Storstad  
City Auditor

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Agenda Item: Water Customer Portal

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Submitted by: Dan Hanson, Water Operations Manager

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**Staff Recommended Action:** Provide staff with direction on the implementation of a customer water consumption portal.

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**Committee Recommended Action:** Motion by Berg, second by Fridolfs to move staff recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion carried 5-1 with Osowski dissenting.

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**Council Action:** Motion by Weigel, second by Berg to approve agenda item. Motion passed unanimously.

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## BACKGROUND:

With the residential water meter replacement project expected to be substantially completed in 2026, City staff are looking for direction from City Council on the implementation of a customer portal in 2027. The portal would provide customers with real-time water consumption data, leak alerts and customizable notifications. If directed to proceed with a user portal, City staff will go through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and return to City Council for approval of the preferred vendor.

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF FACT:

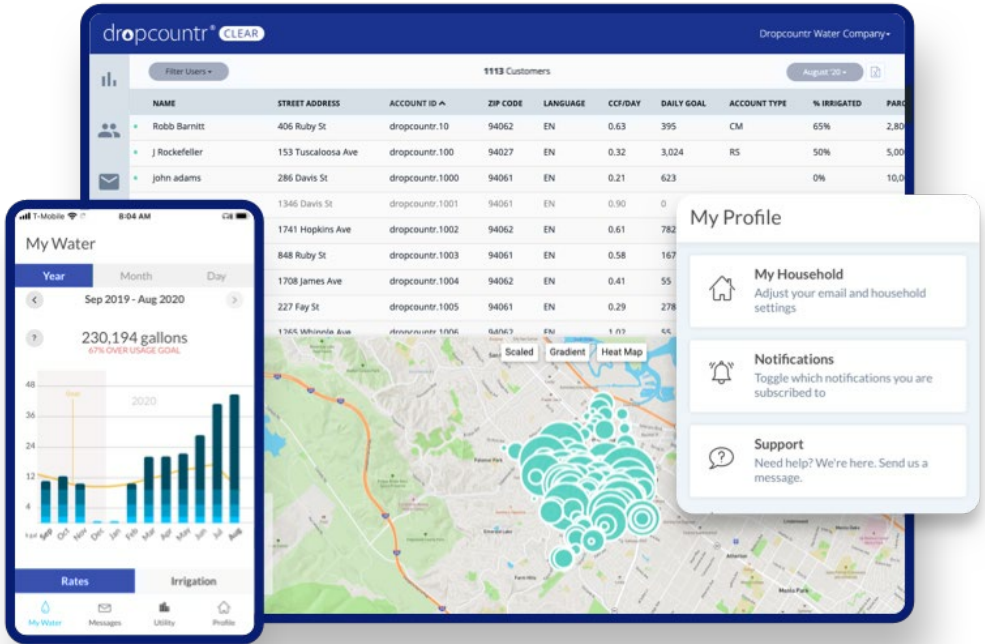
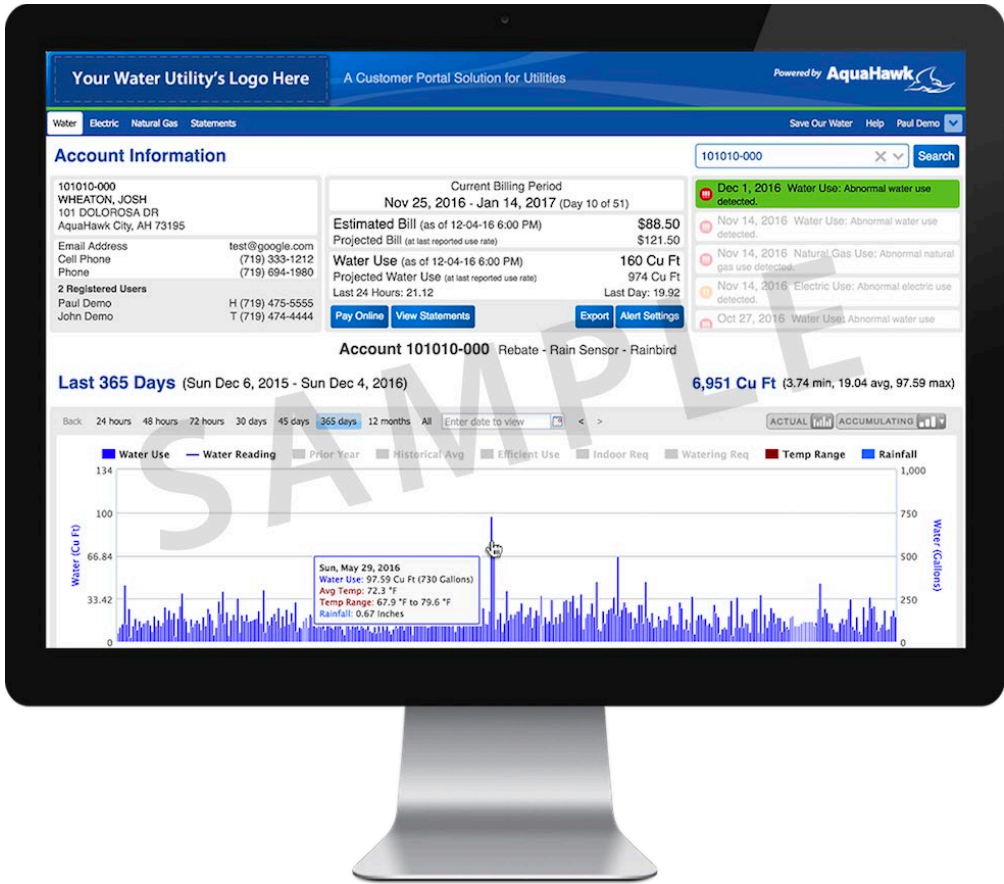
- Only water meters on the new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) network are compatible with a user portal. To date 10,540 of the total 16,018 water meters in our system have been replaced and another 1,500 – 2,000 water meters are expected to be completed before the residential project is completed later this year.
- City staff have also begun replacing commercial meters, starting with those that are obsolete and not compatible with the new transmitters. Those that are new enough to accept a new transmitter are being retrofitted, which will move them to the AMI network without requiring replacement of the meter. The larger (1 1/2" – 6") commercial meters are significantly more expensive than the residential meters requiring a phased multiyear replacement approach. Owners of commercial properties wanting access to the user portal would have their meter replacements/retrofits prioritized.
- There are many different vendors who offer water consumption user portals. The RFP process will allow the City to choose the required specifications resulting in a user portal that meets all our needs. A few basic requirements I see as essential are being fully web

based, a smart phone application, opt-in text and email notifications, and user defined alert levels.

- All the portal vendors I have met with use an all or nothing approach to implementation and pricing. This means our cost is based on the number of meters in our system not the number of active portal users. Based on this understanding the preliminary estimates I have received range from \$50,000 to \$70,000 annually. This equates to \$3.13 - \$4.38 per meter annually. If directed to proceed with a portal funding for an annual fee will be requested in the 2027 Water Distribution budget and continue annually as part of water service charges.
- If implemented a user portal could be used to automate the high/low usage notification process eliminating the need to send out letters. A portal would allow City staff to set usage thresholds for each meter type that when exceeded would trigger an email and text notification to the customer. Currently Finance Department Utility Billing staff spend approximately four days each month reviewing high/low usage accounts and mailing out notification letters. We understand a portal will not eliminate the need for manual account review, but it will speed up the process if a significant number of customers choose to use it.

#### **SUPPORT MATERIALS:**

- Sample pictures from Dropcountr & AquaHawk user portals.



## Track usage, your way.



## Catch leaks, before they cost you.

