City of Fort Smith
City Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeff Dingman, City Administrator

FROM: Maggie Rice, Deputy City Administrator

DATE: November 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Water Service for Large Scale Technology and Digital Infrastructure Developments

SUMMARY

The proposed amendment establishes governing body approval for water service connections serving large-scale technology and digital infrastructure developments, including data centers, whether connected directly to the City's water system or through a contract water user, including Barling and Van Buren.

Certain large-scale technology facilities, particularly data centers, may create substantial and continuous water demands depending on their cooling systems and operational requirements. These demands have the potential to affect available water supplies, system capacity, fire protection, and the City's ability to provide reliable service to existing and future customers. Requiring governing body approval ensures that the City publicly evaluates the potential impacts of these developments before committing public water resources.

The required application information, including annual, monthly, average-day, and maximum-day water consumption, fire-flow capacity, and impacts on groundwater and surface water supplies, will provide the information necessary to evaluate the proposed demand and its effect on the City's water system.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 3306_Ordinance_Chapter_25_Water_Connection.pdf

ORDINANCE NO._____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PORTIONS OF CHAPTER 25 OF THE FORT SMITH MUNICIPAL CODE, ESTABLISHING A PERMIT PROCEDURE FOR CERTAIN CONNECTIONS TO THE UTILITY SYSTEMS OF THE CITY AND CONTRACT USERS; AND, FOR OTHER PURPOSES

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, THAT:

SECTION 1: Chapter 25, Article III, Section 25-68 is amended to add the following provision as Section 25-68(d):

(d) Any connection of a water service for a large-scale technology or digital infrastructure land use, including a data center, either directly to public water lines of the City or the water lines of a contract water user of the City, including Barling and Van Buren, shall require approval by the governing body. A request for water service shall include projections of anticipated annual, monthly, average-day, and maximum day consumption, fire-flow capacity, and impacts on existing ground water and surface water supplies.

SECTION 2: The codifier of the City's ordinances shall codify the amendment adopted by Section 1 as Code Section 25-68(d).

SECTION 3: It is hereby found and determined that the adoption of the amendment to the Chapter 25 is necessary to alleviate an emergency created by the lack of regulation of uses of property within the City of Fort Smith so that the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the City requires that the amendment be effective immediately, and the amendment is hereby made effective, as of date of approval of this Ordinance.

THIS ORDINANCE ADOPTED THIS_____DAY OF_____, 2026.

APPROVED:

_____
Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
City Clerk

Approved as to form:

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Publish 1 time