

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Council Report

Report Number CORP2019-001

Date: January 15, 2019
Time: 1:00pm.
Place: Council Chambers

Ward Community Identifier: 7

Title: High Bill Adjustment – 88 Mary Street West, Lindsay

Author and Title: Linda Liotti, Manager, Revenue and Taxation

Recommendation(s):

That Report CORP2019-001, **High Bill Adjustment – 88 Mary Street West, Lindsay**, be received;

That Council approve the recommendation of the High Water Bill Appeal Committee and provide a credit of \$12,402.09, plus waive penalty and interest from the date of the meeting, to the account at 88 Mary Street West, Lindsay as a one-time exemption; and

That Staff review the policy with consideration to limiting consecutive estimate readings on utility accounts to two billing cycles.

Department Head:_____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other:_____

Chief Administrative Officer:_____

Background:

At the Council Meeting of May 22, 2018, Council adopted the following resolution:

CR2018-340

That Report CORP2018-009, **High Water Bill Adjustment Appeals Committee**, be received; and

That Councillor James, Councillor Veale and Councillor Breadner be appointed to the High Water Bill Adjustment Appeals Committee, in accordance with By-law 2018-039, for the remainder of this term of Council;

That the Terms of Reference for the Committee be amended to include both High Water Bill Adjustment and Mandatory Connection Appeals; and

That the necessary by-law amendments and revised terms of reference be brought forward to Council.

This report addresses the outcome of the High Water Bill Adjustment Appeals Committee meeting.

Rationale:

The High Water Bill Adjustment Appeals Committee held a meeting on September 18, 2018 to hear the concerns of the owner of 88 Mary Street West, Lindsay. This property is a multi-tenanted residential dwelling unit.

In a typical billing cycle (+/- 90 days) this address consumes 250 to 300 cubic metres of water. During the period of November 2016 to May 2018, water meter reads were estimated as repeated attempts to gain access to the property were unsuccessful. In August 2018, access to the property was granted where an actual reading of the meter was recorded. This resulted in an abnormally high consumption read as this reading was capturing the variance between the estimates and previous 18 months of water consumption.

Section 6 of the High Water Bill Adjustment Policy references “catch up bills” where previous bills have been estimated and the subsequent bill is an actual reading. In this situation, the policy recommends that no adjustments shall be provided, however the property owner can be granted an extension up to six months to pay the bill.

The Committee received the deputation of the owner and recommended that a credit be applied to the account, using the same methodology that would be applied had the issue been an obvious or hidden leak (Section 8).

The credit is calculated as 50% of the consumption billed that was above the average consumption. Specific to this property, the credit would be equal to 2,968.57 cubic metres, or \$12,402.09. It is important to note that the High Bill Adjustment Policy does not provide for relief to income producing properties.

The Committee also made the recommendation that staff review the policy with consideration to limiting consecutive estimate readings on utility accounts to two billing cycles.

Other Alternatives Considered:

If Council wishes to uphold the High Water Bill Adjustment Policy, and not provide relief, then the following resolution should be passed:

That Council deny the request for financial relief of the high water bill incurred at 88 Mary Street West, Lindsay for the billing period from December 2017 to February 2018.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The Water and Wastewater rates are established to recover the cost of producing and delivering safe drinking water to property owners, and the collection and treatment of wastewater.

Providing relief to residents for high water bills results in the City incurring a cost for which there isn't a direct revenue for recovery. This cost is then borne by the remaining user rate contributors throughout the City.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) To The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan:

Strategic Enabler – Responsible Fiscal Resource

Consultations:

Property Owner
Director, Public Works
High Water Bill Appeal Committee

Department Head E-Mail: jstover@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Jennifer Stover