

# **The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes**

## **Committee of the Whole Report**

**Report Number CORP2019-017**

---

**Date:** September 10, 2019

**Time:** 1:00 p.m.

**Place:** Council Chambers

---

**Ward Community Identifier: All**

**Title:** Proposed Amendments to High Bill Adjustment Policy  
(CP2017-006)

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

---

### **Recommendation(s):**

**That** Report CORP2019-017, **Proposed Amendments to High Water Bill Adjustment Policy**, be received; and

**That** these proposed amendments to the High Water Bill Adjustment Policy (CP2017-006), attached as Appendix "A" to this report be brought forward for Council for approval at the September 24, 2019 Regular Council Meeting.

**Department Head:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:**\_\_\_\_\_

## Background:

At the Council Meeting on April 18, 2017, Council adopted the High Bill Adjustment Policy replacing the Contested High Consumption Policy.

Subsequently, at the Council Meeting of June 18, 2019, Council adopted the following resolution:

### CR2019-398

**That** the High Water Bill Adjustment Appeal Committee and any requests received for appeal be placed on hold; and

**That** the High Water Bill Adjustment Policy be brought forward to Council at a July 2019 meeting for review.

The existing policy framework for the management of processing high bill adjustments and the role of the High Water Bill Adjustment / Mandatory Service Connection Appeal Committee is under review to ensure alignment with the fiscal responsibility of the City. The purpose of this Report is to update the existing High Bill Adjustment Policy and streamline the appeal process directly to Council.

## Rationale:

The High Bill Adjustment Policy and the High Water Bill Adjustment and Mandatory Connection Appeals Committee have been in existence for over a year. It was felt that it would be prudent to report, through a retrospective lens, a high level overview of activity in both these streams.

### Adjustments Processed by Staff (High Bill Adjustment Policy)

Year	# of Adjustments	Total Relief	Type of Property Adjusted		
			Residential	Multi Residential	Commercial / Industrial
2017	23	\$14,080.53	21	1	1
2018	19	\$9,352.30	17	2	-
2019	17	\$10,838.42	14	2	1
Total	59	\$34,271.25	52	5	2

### High Water Bill Committee Recommendations:

Year	# of Applicants	# of Approved Adjustments	Total Relief	Type of Property Adjusted		
				Residential	Multi Residential	Commercial / Industrial
2017	-	-	\$ -	-	-	-
2018	4	3	\$3,659.21	1	1	1
2019	8	-	\$ -			
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$3,659.21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Further root-cause analysis was completed to gain insight for the majority of circumstances in both streams. The analysis has resulted in the following proposed amendments:

- That relief be provided for obvious or hidden leaks, resulting in high consumption (previously denoted in Section 8) that occurs from circumstances beyond the control of the property owner. Instances, such as leaking plumbing fixtures (ie. taps, toilets, etc.), water softeners, water powered sump pumps will no longer qualify as these matters should be part of regular maintenance of the property by the property owner.
- Instances of unexplained sudden large increase in consumption will now be considered for adjustments, depending on circumstances, and in consultation with the Director of Public Works
- The policy be expanded from only residential and not-for-profit properties to all property types with an adjustment cap of \$1,500 being applied.
- Written notification must occur within 30 days of bill date
- Maximum period adjusted will be one billing cycle (3 months)
- Remove minimum threshold of \$50 for processing of an adjustment

These proposed amendments will create transparency and efficiency in processing the high water bill adjustments as the policy is broadened to include the property classifications presently excluded and currently coming to the Committee, which, in general has been using the policy as a guideline to provide financial relief to these cases.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

None

## **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

Unquantifiable, however, as the majority of adjustments were processed as a result of high consumption due to obvious or hidden leaks resulting from circumstances within the property owner's control, the proposed amendments will reduce the number of adjustments. Also, with the introduction of an adjustment cap of \$1,500 for all properties, this will reduce the financial impact of the processed adjustment.

Further, 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 or exemptions from the physical mandatory service connection requirements (as described in section 2.01, 2.02 and 2.03 of the Mandatory Connection By-law, as amended) 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. It is anticipated that these proposed amendments will lessen the relief provided and increase stability in the Water and Wastewater rates.

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

Strategic Enabler – Responsible Fiscal Resource

### **Consultations:**

Property Owner

Director, Public Works

High Water Bill Adjustment / Mandatory Service Connection Appeal Committee

### **Attachments:**



**Appendix A -  
Proposed Amendment**

**Department Head E-Mail: [jstover@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:jstover@kawarthalakes.ca)**

**Department Head: Jennifer Stover**