



## Council Report

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**Report Number:** CORP2025-018  
**Meeting Date:** June 24, 2025  
**Title:** High Water Bill Relief – 81 Cambridge St S - Lindsay  
**Author and Title:** Linda Liotti, Manager, Revenue and Taxation

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### Recommendation(s):

**That** Report CORP2025-018, **High Water Bill Relief – 81 Cambridge St S - Lindsay**, be received; and

**That** Council deny the request for financial relief of the high water bill incurred at 81 Cambridge St S - Lindsay, and billed during the period of December 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025.

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

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

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

## **Background:**

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on May 6, 2025, a deputation seeking financial relief from a high water bill was presented by Mr. Michael Mudie, property owner of 81 Cambridge Street South, in Lindsay.

Further, at the Council Meeting on May 20, 2025, the following resolution was carried:

### **CR2025-161**

**Moved By** Deputy Mayor McDonald

**Seconded By** Councillor Joyce

**That** the deputation of Michael A. Mudie, **regarding a Request for Relief from a High Water Bill for 81 Cambridge Street South, Lindsay**, be received and referred to Staff for review and report to Council at the Regular Council Meeting of July 22, 2025.

**Carried**

This report addresses that direction.

## **Rationale:**

The scenario presented does not qualify for relief under the High Bill Adjustment Policy, as per Section 11, which states:

### 11. Obvious or Hidden Leaks

11.1 This policy applies to all property types where an obvious or hidden leak has occurred, causing high consumption, **due to circumstances beyond the control of the property owner** and do not include circumstances identified in Section 2.9 of this policy.

Where Section 2.9 reads:

2.9 The following circumstances **will not qualify** for an adjustment to an account:

- Water loss, resulting in high consumption, from circumstances within the control of the property owner. Examples of such circumstances are, but not limited to, obvious or hidden leaks in the following:
  - o Plumbing fixtures (taps, toilets, etc)

- o Water softeners
  - o Irrigation system
  - o Icemakers
  - o Water powered sump pumps
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- Water loss due to theft, vandalism or construction damage, as the responsibility to resolve these issues lies with the customer
  
  - A leak was caused by a third party from whom the customer can recover their costs
  
  - A dwelling and/or building is Unoccupied and/or Vacant for 72 hours or more
  
  - Costs can be recovered through an insurance claim

The property owner contacted the Utility Billing Division via email on March 19, 2025. He advised that a previous courtesy email sent on November 19, 2024, by the utility billing division, informing him that there was high consumption on the account based on the meter read obtained on November 1, 2024, went to his junk email folder.

On March 21, 2025, City staff followed up with a phone call and spoke with the property owner. Staff advised that in November 2024, an email and two telephone attempts were made to notify him of the high consumption. Further, that in these communications, staff were advising that the meter was alerting “continuous flow”, indicating there was water constantly going through the meter, a prime indicator of a leak. City staff did not receive any response to the November 19, 2024, email nor the voicemails left. In this phone call with City staff, the property owner advised that the property is tenanted and that there had been a leaking toilet in the apartment, which had been recently repaired. City staff advised him that high consumption due to a leak does not qualify for financial relief, as per the High Bill Adjustment policy. The property owner requested the matter be escalated to the Manager of Revenue & Taxation (Manager).

On March 24, 2025, the Manager spoke with the property owner confirming that City staff had provided the correct information, namely, that high consumption resulting from a toilet leak does not qualify for financial relief, as directed by Policy. The property owner reiterated that the property is tenanted and there were challenges to taking immediate action to repair the leak. The Manager suggested he refer to the Residential

Tenancies Act, to gain insight as to the landlord’s right of access for necessary repairs to the apartment.

The Manager recommended that he change the mailing address on the utility bill, as currently, it was being mailed to the property, per his direction. This would ensure he was aware of the water consumption and billed amounts.

The property owner insisted that financial relief must be provided. The Manager restated that the policy does not permit relief for toilet leaks. He then requested contact information for the Mayor’s office, which was provided via email (May 24, 2025 @ 7:55 pm).

The key facts are as follows:

### 1. High Consumption Periods

The below table highlights the following:

December 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025, high consumption period in red

September 1-November 30, 2024, high consumption period in green

Read Date	Billing Period		Due Date	Current Reading	Consumption (cubic metres)	Usage Days	Avg Daily Consumption (cubic metres)	Fixed Charges	Metered Charges	Fixed + Metered Charges
	Start Date	End Date								
2-Jun-25	Check Read			3710.70	2.90	33	0.09			
29-Apr-25	1-Mar-25	31-May-25	30-Jun-25	3707.80	456.40	89	5.13	\$207.30	\$ 2,236.36	\$ 2,443.66
30-Jan-25	1-Dec-24	28-Feb-25	31-Mar-25	3251.40	1092.90	90	12.14	\$203.79	\$ 5,242.28	\$ 5,446.07
1-Nov-24	1-Sep-24	30-Nov-24	2-Jan-25	2158.50	876.40	98	8.94	\$202.20	\$ 4,162.90	\$ 4,365.10
26-Jul-24	1-Jun-24	31-Aug-24	30-Sep-24	1282.10	155.30	87	1.79	\$202.20	\$ 737.68	\$ 939.88
30-Apr-24	1-Mar-24	31-May-24	28-Jun-24	1126.80	51.10	92	0.56	\$202.20	\$ 242.72	\$ 444.92
29-Jan-24	1-Dec-23	29-Feb-24	28-Mar-24	1075.70	57.90	88	0.66	\$197.25	\$ 265.76	\$ 463.01
2-Nov-23	1-Sep-23	30-Nov-23	2-Jan-24	1017.80	26.30	99	0.27	\$197.25	\$ 120.72	\$ 317.97
26-Jul-23	1-Jun-23	31-Aug-23	29-Sep-23	991.50	26.90	89	0.30	\$197.25	\$ 123.47	\$ 320.72
28-Apr-23	1-Mar-23	31-May-23	30-Jun-23	964.60	39.70	91	0.44	\$194.06	\$ 178.80	\$ 372.86

Most recently, a meter reading was taken on April 29, 2025, for the March 1-May 31, 2025, billing period, highlighted in blue. This reading suggests that there was continued high consumption from the previous read of January 30 to April 29, 2025.

A check read was completed on June 2, 2025. The meter reading was 3710.70, hence, an average daily consumption of .09 cubic metres. This is abnormally low for

an occupied residence as the average home with two occupants uses .63 cubic metres per day.

**2. Known cause to the high consumption period between meter read dates of July 26 - November 1, 2024, and November 1-January 30, 2025, as property owner confirms there was a leaking toilet**

- As noted above, Section 2.9 of the High Bill Adjustment Policy does not apply to water loss, resulting in high consumption, from obvious or hidden leaks in plumbing fixtures, such as toilets.
- Fundamentally, the water meter is engineered such that the water must flow through and displace the measuring component in the meter to capture the volume/consumption. The mechanism is not capable of speeding up or registering a significantly higher reading than the actual.
- Meters are calibrated and tested before they are shipped to the City and installed. The average functional life of a water meter is 30 years.
- The water meter at 81 Cambridge St S was installed on February 10, 2016, therefore is only 9 years old. It is well within its functional life and, hence, is not targeted for replacement.

**Other Alternatives Considered:**

If Council's should choose to provide relief, with consideration that this scenario falls outside of the High Bill Adjustment policy, the adjustment would be calculated using Section 11.13, which states:

Section 11. Obvious or Hidden Leaks

11.13 The adjustment will be calculated as 50% of the difference between the high water bill and the average consumption, to a maximum of \$1,500 as per Section 13.1.

Section 13. Adjustment Cap

13.1 Adjustments under this policy will be capped at \$1,500 for all properties.

In this case, the relief calculation is based on 546.45 m<sup>3</sup> which represents 50% of the difference between the high consumption of 1,092.90 m<sup>3</sup> and average consumption of

63.50 m<sup>3</sup>, resulting in a one-time adjustment in the amount of \$2,677.61 which would be capped at \$1,500.00. The following resolution should be passed accordingly:

**That** Council approves providing relief under the High Water Bill Adjustment Policy of \$1,500.00, as a one-time exemption for the same property owners;

Or

If Council's inclination is to provide relief, with consideration that this scenario falls outside of the High Bill Adjustment policy, Council can approve relief for an amount, save and except fixed charges (\$207.30).

**That** Council approves providing relief in the amount of "x" as a one-time exemption for the same property owners.

### **Alignment to Strategic Priorities**

This report is in alignment with the Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan priority of good government.

### **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 water bills results in the City incurring a cost with no recovery revenue. This cost is then borne by the remaining user rate contributors throughout the City.

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A – CP2017-006-High-Bill-Adjustment-Policy (v. Sept-24-2019)



Adobe Acrobat  
Document

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