



Staff Report

Report No.: CPS-13-2019

Meeting Date: February 6, 2019

Submitted by: Melissa Kopal, Manager of Finance, Tiffany Farrell, Director of Corporate Services

Subject: Resident request for adjustment of water usage

Recommendation:

THAT no action be taken on the request to adjust the water usage on the resident's water account.

Purpose:

A resident, Mrs. Acierno, has requested that the Municipality adjust the water usage that was reported on her November 2018 water bill. Mrs. Acierno has spoken with staff at the Municipal office including the Manager of Finance and would like to escalate the issue to Council. The Municipal staff do not have authority to write off water usage when it is not a mistake done by the Municipality.

Background:

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre provides water services to the residents within our community.

As indicated by By-law 2018-028, all water passing through a water meter must be charged for whether used or wasted. It is the Municipality's responsibility to bill as per the read on the water meter and we rely heavily on the meter's technology because of this. It is not the Municipality's responsibility to verify water usage or be responsible for water leaks past the water meter.

The Municipality offers physical meter checks by our Water Technicians for a fee set out in our Fees and Charges By-law. If the water meter is found to measure incorrectly, the cost is assumed by the Municipality and is refunded to the resident.

If the resident requests further action after our physical meter check, the water meter can be taken out and sent back to the manufacturer for testing at the home owners cost. If the water meter is found to measure incorrectly, the cost is assumed by the Municipality and is refunded to the resident.

If a water meter is found to be not working properly, the Municipality can adjust the usage based on an estimated average readings from the previous months.

Analysis:

Refer to Delegation request from Mrs. Acierno.



Staff Report

The Municipality assisted the resident to the best of their ability to determine the high usage in a set time period with no result.

Timeline

December 10, 2018 – November water usage and charges were billed to residents (with a due date of December 31, 2018.)

Invoice to Mrs. and Mr. Acierno was for \$459.70 with water usage of 63 cubic meters.

December 12, 2018 – Mrs. Acierno contacted the office to discuss the water bill and usage.

The Finance Department discussed potential reasons for the spike in consumption, asked for the current meter read, and provided the day-by-day consumption history to the home owner. The day-by-day consumption history indicated that 5 days had very high water usage (November 25 to November 29), then back to normal consumption for the rest of the period. The Finance Department also offered to send the water meter for testing at an additional cost that would be refundable if an issue is detected.

December 14, 2018 – Mrs. Acierno contacted the Manager of Finance to escalate the issue and once again it was offered that a Water Technician from the Municipality to visit the site to inspect the meter. The cost of this was waived (\$35).

December 20, 2018 – Water Technician performed a physical water meter check, and reported that the meter was working correctly. The water technician performed a leakage test and verified the water meter read.

Mrs. Acierno reached out to the office to request an adjustment on the water usage again.

December 24, 2018 – The Manager of Finance responded to the above request by offering to reach out to the Manufacturer in the New Year.

December 28, 2018 - \$154 was paid to the Municipality by Mrs. and Mr. Acierno.

January 3, 2019 - \$15.29 penalty was charged to the account for short payment.

January 4, 2019 – The Manager of Finance discussed the situation with the manufacturer, Badger. The Badger technician informed the Municipality that it was not possible for the meter to read faulty for a few days then read back to normal.

Mrs. Acierno was then contacted to inform her of Badger's response.

During this process the Manager of Water and Wastewater and the Supervisor of Water Wastewater were also consulted and have agreed with the Manager of Finance and Badger.

Any refund would contravene the Municipality's water By-Law 2018-028 and may cause other residents to bring forward their high water bills and expect refunds.

Financial Implications:



Staff Report

A reduction to November 2018's usage to an average monthly usage (16 cubic meters) would result in loss revenue of \$305.50 plus reversal of penalties of \$15.29.

There is also risk of loss revenue of other residents that would come forward if a reduction is given in this case.

Strategic Plans:

Financial: Maintain Financial Integrity