



STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL ENGINEERING and PUBLIC WORKS

1100 Patricia Boulevard, Prince George, B.C., V2L 3V9

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2015
TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL
FROM: DAVE DYER, GENERAL MANAGER, ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS
SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY WATER METER PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. **THAT Council approve the implementation of a Voluntary Water Meter Program for one hundred (100) water meters in 2016 available to single-family residential customers currently on a fixed rate.**

PURPOSE:

As per Mayor Lyn Hall's report regarding Voluntary Water Metering Program and Waste Container Change Fees dated September 8th, this report has been prepared in response to the Council Resolution that was passed unanimously during the September 14th Open Meeting of Council that "Subject to public consultation, staff BE DIRECTED to bring forward for Council consideration before December 31, 2015, a plan for reinstating the Voluntary Water Metering Program with the parameters to amend the program to waive the cost of the water meter purchase for residential households participating in the Program."

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposed implementation of the Voluntary Water Meter program supports Council's goals of 'Green City, Green Practices' and 'Sustainable Infrastructure'.

BACKGROUND:

To ensure that the City of Prince George's drinking water supply remains reliable and safe and continues to meet the needs of our community, the City began implementing a Water Conservation Plan in 2005. As part of that program, a Voluntary Water Meter Program was initiated. Over a three year period, fifty-eight homes participated in the voluntary water meter program and in subsequent years, these homes saw an average decrease of 30% in their water usage.

There are a number of benefits for a Water Utility that utilizes water meters as it allows for more accurate tracking of water consumption, allows for more precise knowledge on leakage within the system, and for the customer, it allows for onsite monitoring to ensure proper billing. Apart from the financial benefits for the Utility of reducing water usage through decreased pumping and treatment costs, water meters promote water conservation by giving customers a means to measure their consumption and thus encouraging greater efforts to detect and repair water leaks that can waste thousands of litres of water every year.

The 2005 Water Conservation Program, through its education programs and other initiatives, has increased awareness around the need to be more responsible in our use of water resources and has encouraged a greater commitment to conserve water where possible. Since 2005, the City's average day demand decreased from 600 litres to 524 litres per capita. Though encouraging, this still remains higher than the provincial average of 350 litres

per capita. The area of greatest concern is the maximum day demand which is measured to be 1,178 litres per day during summer months.

Engineering and Public Works is in the process of updating the 2005 Water Conservation Plan and expects to present the plan to Council in the spring of 2016. The Plan indicates that the implementation of any type of water meter program, which includes education programs about water conservation strategies, will reduce consumption of water and therefore produce a savings for both the property owner and the water utility.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Engineering and Public Works recommends that the Voluntary Water Meter Program consist of the Water Utility providing, on a "first come-first serve" basis, one hundred (100) water meters to single family residential customers currently on a fixed rate. The financial consideration associated with the implementation of a Voluntary Water Meter Program includes both equipment and administrative costs. The estimated costs to the Water Utility for a program with one hundred (100) voluntary water meters would be approximately \$63,000.00. This includes the cost of the residential meter (\$451.00 each), plumbing permit fee (\$140.00), and the administrative costs for the set up and delivery of the meters. Finance confirms that the total cost of the program can be borne by the Water Utility.

It is important to note that there is a cost associated with this program for the homeowner and includes the installation of the water meter by a certified plumber. These costs could vary greatly depending on the installation location of the meter in the home. For example, an unfinished basement would be considerably less than a fully finished space. If the program is implemented, this information would be communicated upfront to allow property owners the ability to consider this in their decision.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Administration has reviewed the financial and operational considerations associated with implementing a Voluntary Water Meter Program and recommends that Council approve the implementation of the program which includes 100 water meters in 2016 available to single family residential customers, currently on a fixed rate.

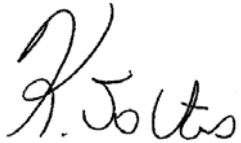
Respectfully submitted:



Dave Dyer, General Manager of Engineering and Public Works

Report written by: Gina Layte Liston, Director of Public Works

To: Mayor and Council



K. Folts