
REPORT NAME

Water Billing Issue, M. Kipp

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the report "Water Billing Issue, M. Kipp" as information.

Options (if available):

N/A

IMPLICATIONS

Reason: To update Council on the resolution of the M. Kipp water billing issue brought forward at the January 14, 2025 Council meeting.

Authority: (MGA section/bylaw/policy number): N/A

Amount of funding required: N/A

Funding source: N/A

BACKGROUND

At the January 14, 2025 meeting of Council, Mr. Kipp reviewed his concern regarding his water bill, among other matters:

- There was no consumption noted on his utility billing from March 1, 2024, to October 31, 2024. He was only required to pay the fixed monthly charge of \$62.08 for each two-month period of service. All these bills were flagged as actual reads.
- On December 31, 2024, Mr. Kipp received a bill for \$355.51 for November 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, representing 106.70 cubic metres of water consumption and the two-month service fee (\$62.08). This represents 10 months of consumption - the estimation of the consumption during the four billing periods/eight months where the water meter was not reading properly and one billing period/two months of actual consumption.
- Mr. Kipp also had a concern that the name on the bill did not reflect his wife's new married name, and she was still listed under her maiden name on the bill.

Investigation

- The fourth zero consumption (November 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024) was flagged by Finance on approximately January 6, 2025. This was deemed an unusual occurrence, so a water consumption volume of 106.7 cubic metres for the period between March 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024 was estimated and applied to the bill.
- The estimate was based on the average consumption of six months of actual reads and then applied to the ten months of zero consumption. This is the typical process when there is a meter issue that arises.

Submitted by: Des Mryglod, Director – Engineering & Utilities

Reviewed by: Alan Grayston, General Manager of Development and Community Services

Date: 02/04/25

- The work order for the zero consumption readings was investigated by Leduc County utilities on January 7, 2025, and it was discovered that the magnet attached to the internal turbine connecting it to the meter register had broken free, resulting in the meter register reading zero consumption. The meter was replaced, and consumption was noted again.
- Finance did contact Mr. Kipp about the large bill coming; however, there was some delay as the phone number on file with Finance was Mr. Kipp's father's, not Mr. Kipp's.
- In regard to the billing information, the name on the billing is changed when:
 - the name on the title registered at Alberta Land Titles gets changed. Leduc County receives notification, and this then updates our tax records and the billing information on file, or
 - a written request is received from the individual(s) receiving the bills.

Resolution

Administration reviewed this matter, and the following actions will be taken to address this issue:

1. That Mr. Kipp only be charged for the estimated volume between November 1 and December 31, 2024, and the monthly fixed charge for the same period. The volume consumed between March 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, will not be charged, and there will not be any reimbursement of monthly service charges as service was still being provided to the account. Additionally, there will be no penalties attached to the delay in paying the bill, starting today.
 - This aligns with typical practice of estimating volumes for billing purposes, if required.
 - However, going back several months for the charges may not be reasonable, understanding it was a County equipment failure.
 - Utility service recipients do have a responsibility to note any discrepancies in their readings, high or low, and contact the County.
 - This is considered a unique situation and shouldn't be considered as a typical resolution as unique issues need to be considered on their own merits.
2. The name on the billing will be changed to reflect the current names of the residents, and
3. That administration will develop the appropriate policies and/or administrative directives to document the "back billing" of estimated water/wastewater consumption in various circumstances (e.g., equipment failure) after the Enterprise Resource Planning system is implemented to allow automatic flagging of billing anomalies.

ATTACHMENTS

None