



## Request for Decision

<b>Title</b>	<b>Request for Cancellation of Water Charges – Utility Account 33046.001</b>
<b>Proposed Motion</b>	That Council refuse the request to refund utility charges in the amount of \$6,103.22 for Utility Account 33046.001.
<b>Administrative Recommendation</b>	Administration recommends that Council refuse the request to refund utility charges under section 5(e) of the County’s Waterworks Bylaw 932/02.
<b>Previous Council / Committee Direction</b>	<u>October 25, 2022 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 393/22 That Council refer the request to waive water charges for Utility Account 33046.001 to Administration to present information and a recommendation at a future Council meeting.
<b>Report</b>	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On April 20, 2022, Administration contacted Mr. Jasdeep Lail regarding his high consumption water bill and a possible water leak at his property.</li> <li>• On April 20, 2022, Administration spoke with the customer, a work order was developed, and an appointment scheduled for the following day. During the call, the customer explained that he was not sure why consumption was so high.</li> <li>• On April 21, 2022, a Utility Technician arrived at the home to remove the existing meter and replace with a temporary meter until a flow test could be completed on the existing meter.</li> <li>• During the water meter removal, the Utility Technician noted that basement carpets were wet and that there were new carpet rolls in the basement.</li> <li>• The Utility Technician informed the homeowner that it appeared that there was a water leak in the home; however, the homeowner indicated that the carpets were wet from a failed sump pump.</li> <li>• Landfill permit activity for this property shows that this home was likely undergoing major renovations in April, as 7 tandem loads of commercial waste (i.e. drywall and wood) entered the Roseridge landfill for disposal.</li> <li>• On May 25, 2022, a high-flow and low-flow meter test was completed. The meter was within plus or minus 3% accuracy allowed by the County’s Waterworks Bylaw as shown in Attachment 2.</li> </ul>

- Later that day, Administration attempted to contact Mr. Lail to inform him of the meter test results. Administration was unsuccessful at reaching him by phone, so an email was sent.
- June 13, 2022, Administration was unsuccessful connecting with Mr. Lail to schedule an appointment to replace the temporary meter with his existing meter. The temporary meter remains at the residence to this day.
- August 4, 2022, Administration sent out a final notice due to the outstanding balance of \$6,103.22
- August 19, 2022, Administration was unsuccessful at leaving a voicemail, as the customer's mailbox was full. An email was sent informing the customer of future water disconnect.
- August 23, 2022, Administration emailed and phoned the customer about payment arrears. No connection with the customer could be made.
- August 31, 2022, water was shut off due to nonpayment.
- September 6, 2022, Administration emailed the customer informing that the utility bill would be transferred to property tax by end of September, as per the County's Waterworks Bylaw. The same day, Mr. Lail contacted Administration to request that the charges be waived.
- On September 14, 2022, the Utility & Waste Management Services Manager advised Mr. Lail that due to the meter being accurate, the department was unable to waive the charges of \$6,255.80 or the \$75 penalty for water disconnection.
- The discretion to waive water charges rests with Council.
- Mr. Lail attended and presented his information regarding his request at the October 25, 2022 Regular Council Meeting.

#### Bylaw 932/02 – Waterworks Bylaw

- Section 5(e) states that should any person claim that a meter supplied by Sturgeon County is over-reading, the County will remove the meter and test it for accuracy.
- Section 5(e) also states that if the customer's meter is found to over-read or under-read by more than three percent (3%), the rates for the previous two (2) meter reading periods shall be adjusted by the same percentage as the meter found to be in minimum rate normally charged.
- Section 12(a) states that any water rates in arrears for water supplied by Sturgeon County for services supplied to the customer may be added to the taxes against the premises to which the water services have been supplied.

#### External Communication

- Administration has been in regular contact with customer via email and phone call conversations.

	<u>Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2022 Fees &amp; Charges Bylaw</li> <li>• Waterworks Bylaw 932/02</li> </ul>
<b>Implication of Administrative Recommendation</b>	<u>Strategic Alignment</u> <b>Operational Excellence</b> – Refusing the request to refund utility charges resulting from a confirmed water meter flow test average of 98.8% accuracy, aligns with Section 5(e) of the County’s Waterworks Bylaw 932/02 and demonstrates the County’s commitment to collecting fees consistently among utility customers.  <u>Organizational</u> None.  <u>Financial</u> The County would retain arrears resulting from the outstanding utility bill of \$6103.22, which would go back into the utility budget to recover the cost associated with water and wastewater expenses.
<b>Alternatives Considered</b>	Council could waive utility charges in any amount it considers equitable, up to and including the amount of \$6,103.22 requested.
<b>Implications of Alternatives</b>	<u>Strategic Alignment</u> None.  <u>Organizational</u> A decision to waive utility charges would have minimal organizational impacts.  <u>Financial</u> Refunding the utility charges of \$6,103.22 or any portion thereof would result in a loss of recoverable expenses to the County’s Utility.
<b>Follow up Action</b>	Advise the customer of Council’s decision (Utility & Waste Management Services, November 2022).
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	1. Attachment 1: Water Meter Consumption Graph 2. Attachment 2: Water Meter Flow Test
<b>Report Reviewed by:</b>	Jeffrey Yanew, Manager, Utility & Waste Management Services  Scott MacDougall, Chief Operating Officer – COO  Reegan McCullough, County Commissioner – CAO

## Strategic Alignment Checklist

**Vision:** *Offering a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and natural experiences, Sturgeon County is a municipality that honours its rural roots and cultivates desirable communities. Uniquely situated to provide world-class agricultural, energy, and business investment opportunities, the County prioritizes responsible stewardship and dreaming big.*

**Guiding Principles:** Collaboration | Accountability | Flexibility | Excellence | Safety | Future Readiness | Affordability | Innovation

Community Outcome	Not consistent	Consistent	N/A
<b>Planned Growth</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internationally competitive to attract, grow and sustain diverse businesses; tenacious focus on new growth and innovation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modern broadband and digital capabilities</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low cost, minimal red-tape regulations</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliable and effective infrastructure planning; comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Thriving Communities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces &amp; trail systems; healthy and resilient</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging cultural, historical, and civic amenities; strong community identity and pride</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe, welcoming, and diverse communities; small community feel and personal connection; commitment to high quality of life</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean air, land, and water; Carbon neutral municipal practices; circular economy opportunities</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands; enhanced greening and biodiversity; safekeeping ecosystems</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable development; partnerships with industry and others to drive emission reductions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Collaborative Governance</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predictable and stable external relationships; volunteer partnerships</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful connections with Indigenous communities</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing community consultation and engagement; transparent and action-oriented decision making based on sound rationale</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respectful and informed debate; clear and supportive governance processes</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Operational Excellence</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged and effective people – Council, Admin and Volunteers; continuous learning and improvement mindset; nimble and bold, with strong leadership</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality cost-effective service delivery; robust procurement and operational practices and policies; asset management and performance measurement; careful debt and reserve stewardship; long-term financial planning and sustainability</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future focused thinking to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative revenue generation and service delivery models integrated strategic and business planning</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>