

Beamsville Room
January 29th, 2003

The Committee of the Whole of the Town of Lincoln met on Wednesday, January 29th, 2003, at 7:00 pm, in the Beamsville Room. All members of Council were present except Ald. P. Randall and the meeting was chaired by Mayor R. A. Konkle. Staff present: S. Bruce Peever (Chief Administrative Officer), M. Merritt (Director of Finance), J. Kukalis (Director of Public Works) and W. Kolasa (Director of Corporate Services/Clerk).

Mayor Konkle called the meeting to order and advised those in attendance that the primary purpose of this evenings meeting was to review water pricing in the Town of Lincoln and to consider policies prepared by staff to deal with water billing adjustments and water meter testing.

DELEGATIONS

DOUG BURTCH, RE: WATER ACCOUNT, 4987 JOHN STREET.

Mr. Doug Burtch, a property owner and resident at 4987 John Street in Beamsville, addressed Committee of the Whole to express concerns regarding water billing to his property since his acquisition of the property of August 1999. Mr. Burtch advised that since acquiring his residence at that time, billing had been undertaken by the Town using estimated meter readings even though attempts had been made by Mrs. Burtch to request that an actual read of the water meter at the residence be undertaken. Mr. Burtch advised that a bill finally based on an actual meter read in August of 2002 was extraordinarily high and could not be reconciled with Mr. Burtch's expectations of his water usage. Mr. Burtch described the efforts he had undertaken upon receipt of the bill to have the water meter tested to verify the accuracy of the meter and the water bill. Mr. Burtch advised that he could not comprehend using the volume of water indicated in the billing and therefore suggested the billing and the meter to be incorrect.

Members of Committee considered the information provided by the delegation, the sample bills presented by Mr. Burtch, and reviewed each of the matters raised by the delegation. Members also received information from staff regarding the Town's water meter reading contract and the processes undertaken by meter readers to obtain readings in the field. Members also considered the manner in which bills were calculated by the Finance Department based on either estimated readings or actual readings.

Members of Committee also received a briefing note from the Director of Finance providing information regarding the status of the account and the reduction of 46,000 gallons that was proposed to be made to the account of Mr. Burtch upon adoption of the draft Water and Sewer Billing Adjustment Policy. Members considered the delegation, the Briefing Note from the Director of Finance and after consideration of the presentation made regarding the Draft Water and Sewer Billing Adjustment Policy, introduced the following recommendation.

Motion:

Moved by Ald. B. Culp, Seconded by Ald. D. Good

THAT the Briefing Note from the Director of Finance, dated January 29, 2003, regarding the water account of Mr. Doug Burtch, 4987 John Street, be received.

AND FURTHER THAT the concerns of Mr. Doug Burtch regarding his water account at 4987 John Street, be dealt with in accordance with the proposed Water Billing Adjustment Policy.

CARRIED

REPORTS

WATER PRICING OVERVIEW.

The Chief Administrative Officer presented a series of slides to Committee detailing the methodology utilized to establish water rates and water billing procedures for the Town of Lincoln as originally considered during 2003 Budget Deliberations. Members of Committee reviewed base water charges used to offset administration and billing costs of the municipality based on water meter size, calculations utilized to determine water rates for the Town, and 2003 water rates and water budgets for the Town. Members of Committee considered the presentation and also reviewed various aspects of the Town's water program including the water supply infrastructure as well as Town's ownership of all water meters in the municipality.

WATER AND SEWER BILLING ADJUSTMENT POLICY.

The Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Finance introduced and explained a draft policy to deal with water and sewer billing adjustments arising from situations where no physical record of water use was available to the Town or where there was a discrepancy between the water meter and its remote reader. Staff detailed the four primary situations which had been encountered and which appropriately require an adjustment to a customer's bill. Those four circumstances included accounts where only estimated reads were available for a period of four to eight billing periods inclusive, accounts where only estimated reads were available for a period greater than eight billing periods, accounts where no water meter and or no physical record of usage were available, or accounts where a disagreement in consumption existed between the remote readout unit and the old water meter. The Director of Finance reviewed the policies proposed by staff to adjust customers bills in each of the situations. Committee considered each of the practices proposed, as well as information that upon completion of the Town's Water Meter Replacement Program, that these policies would become redundant because of the improved technology of the new water meters which would eliminate the need for estimated water reads.

Members of Committee also considered sewer charges forming part of the water bill and information that adjustments to water consumption levels would result in corresponding adjustments to sewer charges contained on the bill. Direction was provided to staff to ensure that reference to such sewer charge adjustments would also be included in the draft policy. Committee's consideration of the policy, the proposed amendments regarding sewer charges and the information presented by staff, concluded with the introduction of the following recommendation.

Motion:

Moved by Ald. B. Culp, Seconded by Ald. R. Kelly

THAT the Water Billing Adjustment Policy # 03-01, dated January 29th, 2003, be adopted and ratified by Council.

CARRIED

REQUISITE WATER METER TESTING POLICY.

The Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Public Works introduced a draft policy to govern the actions of Town staff and their contractors engaged in the replacement of residential water meters. The proposed policy would ensure that when significant discrepancies were identified between water meters and the remote readers during the water meter replacement program, the meter would be retained, tagged with the address and date removed, and forwarded to a fully accredited testing laboratory to determine whether the meter was in good

working condition. Staff advised that once testing results were available, the Finance Department would be notified and should the meter be found to be outside normal operating specifications, adjustments to the water and sewer bill of the customer would be made in accordance with current Town water billing policies, Town bylaws and Provincial legislation. Members of Committee considered the proposed Water Meter Testing Policy, the fact that testing would be undertaken during the Water Meter Replacement Program at no charge to the customer, and concluded consideration of the issue with the introduction of the following recommendation.

Motion:

Moved by Ald. D. Good, Seconded by Ald. B. Culp

THAT the Requisite Water Meter Testing Policy be adopted and ratified by Council.

CARRIED

CLOSED SESSION

At this point in the meeting the following motions were introduced.

Motion:

Moved by Ald. R. Foster, Seconded by Ald. R. Kelly

RE: Closed Session

THAT Committee adjourn to closed session in order to address Personal Matters regarding identifiable individuals, including municipal or local board employees.

CARRIED

Motion:

Moved by Ald. R. Foster, Seconded by Ald. W. MacMillan

RE: Closed Session

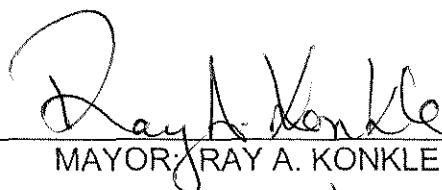
THAT Committee resume in open session.

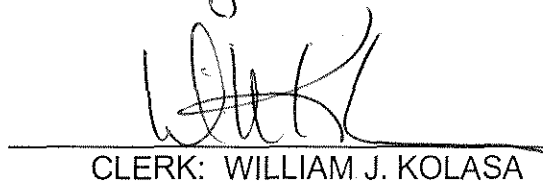
CARRIED

Consideration of the subject matter in closed session resulted in no motions or recommendations from Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.


MAYOR: RAY A. KONKLE


CLERK: WILLIAM J. KOLASA