

Memo



To: Regular Meeting
From: **Manager of Operations**
Date: 2017-11-27
Subject: Water Meter Installation Complaint

Background

Staff have corresponded with the resident making the complaint over the last year. They have been insistent that the matter is brought before Council for discussion. The resident claims that this is the first time that his pipes have frozen in fourteen years and that this was caused by the water meter. They are seeking reimbursement from the City for repairs performed on their plumbing. Staff maintain that the water meter was installed as per the contract and that the resident is responsible for ensuring that their plumbing is protected from freezing. The City's bylaw states that:

"The Owner shall provide adequate protection for the Water Meter against freezing, heat and other severe conditions that might damage the Water Meter."

Owner means the property owner as defined in the bylaw.

Communications with the resident

From: David Reid
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 7:46 AM
To: Resident' <emailaddress>
Cc: 'dheinrich@grandforks.ca' <dheinrich@grandforks.ca>
Subject: RE: Water line freezing problems last winter and subsequent emails

Hi Resident,

I have attached the section of the RFP for the inside water meter project scope and project specifications that refers to your concern.

Under the scope of the project

The Proponent will be responsible for:

- 1) Scheduling of installations with customers;
- 2) Installation of approximately 215 residential water meters – Inside meter installations;
- 3) All quality control;
- 4) Providing progress reports to the City;
- 5) Customer Relations: conducting themselves in a courteous and appropriate manner at all times;

- 6) Installation records for each installation (see Schedule E).

And under the specifications

The Contractor will be responsible for:

- a) Any damage caused by negligence on the part of the Contractor (including subcontractors & employees);
- b) The horizontal installation of all inside water meters
- c) Take before and after pictures of the works and surrounding area from the same location
- d) Pictures should clearly identify
- e) Having a response plan for handling emergency issues (i.e. broken water lines).
- f) All quality control.

The City had no language in the RFP requesting contractors to heat tape meters for the City.

Residents were also given a letter at the time of installation to sign making them aware of their responsibility to keep the meter from freezing as per the City's bylaw.

I hope this clears up any misconceptions about the responsibilities of the residents.

Thanks
David

From: Diane Heinrich
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 2:18 PM
To: Resident <emailaddress>
Cc: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>; Cavan Gates <cgates@grandforks.ca>
Subject: RE: Water meter and Freezing line.

Hi Resident:

Thanks for your emails and your delivery to the office; I will have your situation looked into from the City's perspective.

Best Regards,
Diane

From: Resident [emailaddress]
Sent: October 24, 2017 11:54 AM
To: Diane Heinrich <dheinrich@grandforks.ca>
Subject: Water meter and Freezing line.

Diane:

I will be forwarding you a couple of emails I sent last winter to Dean Chapman when I had trouble with my water lines freezing up on me. They outline my problems pretty well and illustrate that I have done as much as possible to insure I did not get frozen and bursting lines. I have not been successful in getting any resolution of this with David Reid so I went ahead and redid the insulation on the meter and heat taped it. I did not want any problems this winter. The costs were \$50.00 for handyman's labour and \$39.60 for a heat tape and plastic ties. There is no way this can be construed as a maintenance problem as repeatedly stated by Mr. Reid. After 14 years of no problems with my water lines with temperatures as low as -30C and the first winter after the City removed the skirting and installed a water meter I have freezing lines this is not a maintenance problem.

I will drop off the bills incurred for your attention and reimbursement.

From: Resident [mailto:emailaddress]

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2017 11:54 AM

To: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>

Subject: Re: Water line freezing problems last winter and subsequent emails

Further to my email of Sept. 25, I understand that the City spec's to contractors installing water meters that heat taping them was a requirement where exposure to them could result in freezing lines.

Resident

On Mon, Sep 25, 2017 at 11:56 AM, Resident <emailaddress> wrote:

I don't agree with you and will take this further. How can you state that this is not an installation problem when I have had no problems with freezing water lines for the 14 yrs I have resided here with winter temperatures down to -30C and the first winter after the City installs a water meter I have problems? What is your rationale?

Resident

On Mon, Sep 25, 2017 at 10:02 AM, David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca> wrote:

Hi Resident,

As per our Bylaw which states

"The Owner shall provide adequate protection for the Water Meter against freezing, heat and other severe conditions that might damage the Water Meter."

The work you had performed at your residence by your preferred handy man seems to fit the above statement.

If there was a problem with the installation itself then the City would have rectified the installation problem. I don't see this as being the case.

Thanks

David

From: Resident [mailto:emailaddress]
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2017 1:00 PM
To: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>
Subject: Water line freezing problems last winter and subsequent emails

My handy man had this morning free and was willing to help me out with removing the skirting and checking last falls water meter installation so I took him up on it. No time to give you a shout. Found the insulation more that a bit lacking and we decided that it would be a good idea to heat wrap the new lines to the water meter at the same time we brought the insulation up to par. Cost me 50 bucks for labour and just over 40 bucks for a heat tape, plastic ties and screws. I supplied the insulation which I had on hand and we ended up using all of it, a 2 ft X 2 ft X 2 ft full box. Now, before I go to the trouble of submitting an invoice for your approval and for repayment by the City you can advise me if you will approve same or if you are going to stick your guns that this was not an installation problem.

Resident

From: Resident [mailto:emailaddress]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2017 1:00 PM
To: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>
Subject: Re: Water meters.

I can't let this drag on. If it's still your Residentd that this is a maintenance problem and not installation then I will have to take steps on my own to rectify this. I'll let you know when and you are quite welcome to check out what is found when that is done.

Resident

On Wed, Aug 30, 2017 at 1:28 PM, Resident <emailaddress> wrote:
Suggest you stop by and have a look at the skirting replacement job at the water meter install east end of my trailer. Pretty shabby. Lots of screws missing. No wonder there was a frost leakage this past winter. Need something done before freeze up.

Resident

From: Resident [mailto:emailaddress]
Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2017 11:40 AM
To: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>
Subject: Re: Freezing water lines

This is not a maintenance issue, this is an installation issue and must be addressed by the City. I had my trailer skirting insulated some years ago when I moved here and have had no troubles with freezing water lines until this past winter when the City removed the skirting and insulation to install the water meter. I was not in attendance when the installation was done but it is obvious that the re-insulation is not done properly. The City is going to have a tough time arguing the opposite. No problem with freezing lines for all my residence here with temperatures as low as -30C and the first winter after the water

meter install and I have troubles with temperatures only as low as -15C?
Why has this not been addressed with my first emails?

Resident

On Fri, Aug 25, 2017 at 2:11 PM, David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca> wrote:
Hi Resident,

This is a Bylaw issue as per the water regulations bylaw section

10.9 The Owner shall maintain the Water Meter on his or her property in good repair and shall not tamper with the Water Meter in any manner. The Owner shall provide adequate protection for the Water Meter against freezing, heat and other severe conditions that might damage the Water Meter.

As per the Bylaw quoted above Dean will not be able to complete your request as it goes against that bylaw. If you have an issue with the content of the bylaw you will have to appeal to Council with your concerns regarding their bylaw.

I hope this helps in defining the City's process for your issue.

From: Resident [mailto:emailaddress]
Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 9:41 AM
To: David Reid <dreid@grandforks.ca>

Subject: Fwd: Freezing water lines

David:

Understand water meters are being handled by you. Having no luck getting a response from Dean. Getting to that time that some scheduling should be done. Am forwarding all emails I sent Dean.

Resident

Address

Phone Number

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Resident** <emailaddress>
Date: Mon, Aug 21, 2017 at 1:37 PM
Subject: Fwd: Freezing water lines
To: dchapman@grandforks.ca

OK Dean, Need a reply. Gotta get this fixed pretty soon. In a week or so will be shutting down my outside water and would be a good time to beef up the insulation around the water meter and pipes.

Resident Phone Number

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Resident** <emailaddress>
Date: Thu, May 4, 2017 at 6:08 PM

Subject: Fwd: Freezing water lines

To: dchapman@grandforks.ca

What's your schedule for removing the skirting and reinsulating my water meter.

Resident

address

May 4, 2017

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Resident** <emailaddress>

Date: Wed, Jan 11, 2017 at 10:59 PM

Subject: Freezing water lines

To: dchapman@grandforks.ca

Dean:

As per my email of Dec 16 last I've encountered frozen water lines again. I've been pretty diligent about running my taps overnight if the temperatures over -10C. I may have been a bit too late this evening or the temperature drop (to -17C) was more than expected or a bit of both. In any event when I turned on my taps at 10:30 this evening there was no response. As I did previously, I cranked up the thermostat on my natural gas system hoping again the under floor ducts would heat up the crawl space enough to thaw out the lines. Took a bit longer than last time but it worked. As I've stated I will expect the City to check out my water meter install and rectify the weather proofing when convenient this spring. Until then it looks like I'll have to keep a closer eye on the temperature and keep my taps running when it drops.

Resident,

Emailed 10:56 PM Jan. 11, 2017

Benefits or Impacts

General

Strategic Impact



[fiscal]



[economic growth]



[community engagement]



[community liveability]

Policy/Legislation

Attachments

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Memo 2017 - Water Meter Complaint.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 17, 2017

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Diane Heinrich - Nov 17, 2017 - 3:37 PM