

Request for Decision



To: Committee of the Whole
From: Financial Services
Date: September 3, 2019
Subject: Draft Utility Billing Bylaw
Recommendation: **THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to Council to implement a low-income seniors and persons with disabilities discount program for the electrical utility.**

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends to Council to give first three readings of Utility Billing Bylaw No. 2064, 2019 at the September 16th, 2019 Regular Meeting.

Background

The Financial Services Department has been working in conjunction with the City's Operations Department to revise the utilities' regulatory bylaws by removing the sections related to billing and customer accounts and reformulating them in a separate bylaw.

The terms included in the regulatory bylaws which are related to customer accounts and the billing of fees and charges are (or should be) common to each utility and justifiably belong in a single bylaw.

Staff has included some additional clauses in this new bylaw to reduce credit risk associated with high dollar customer accounts, especially those which may not be recoverable through a transfer to property taxes. These provisions would allow the City to request a security deposit and/or to increase the frequency of billing from bi-monthly to monthly if circumstances warrant it.

The major change proposed in this bylaw is the suggestion of a low-income customer discount program for seniors and persons with disabilities to offer some financial relief with electricity costs. Staff has included this for discussion by the Committee of the Whole in the hopes of receiving some feedback on whether to proceed with such a program. Should the COTW agree to implement this, staff would need direction regarding an acceptable level of foregone revenue and thus an appropriate discount percentage to apply.

This bylaw is presented here for discussion, with first three readings planned for the September 16th Regular Meeting. It will have to be adopted at the same time as the new regulatory bylaws being put forward by Operations.

Benefits or Impacts

General

Strategic Impact



Community Livability

- Implementation of a discount program recognizes and mitigates the financial impacts of increasing costs faced by senior and low-income citizen.



Fiscal Responsibility

- New provisions in this bylaw will reduce credit risk for high value customer accounts.

Policy/Legislation

Draft Utility Billing Bylaw No. 2064, 2019

Water Regulations Bylaw No. 1973-A1

Sewer Regulations Bylaw No. 1974

Electrical Utility Regulatory Bylaw No. 2015, 2015

Attachments

Draft Utility Billing Bylaw No. 2064, 2019

Water Regulations Bylaw No. 1973-A1 – financial sections

Sewer Regulations Bylaw No. 1974 – financial sections

Electrical Utility Regulatory Bylaw No. 2015, 2015 – financial sections

Recommendation

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Options

1. THAT Committee of the Whole accepts the report.
2. THAT Committee of the Whole does not accept the report.
3. THAT Committee of the Whole refers the matter back to staff for further information.