

PRESENT: S. Johnson (Chairperson)
K. Jones (Vice-Chairperson)
D. Bower
S. Doerksen
I. Lessner (entered meeting at 4:05 p.m.)
D. Stonoga

COUNCIL: Councillor Trevelyan (Council Liaison)

STAFF: J. Gordon, Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations
C. Ponzini, Director of Financial Services
J. Brierley-Green, Manager of Revenue Services
D. Kell, Manager of Communications and Government Relations
K. Sidhu, Committee Clerk
D. Johnstone, Committee Clerk

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2020-WCAP-033 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel adopt the agenda for December 15, 2020 as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2020-WCAP-034 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel adopt the minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting as circulated.

CARRIED

Note: I. Lessner entered the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTRONIC MEETING
Corporate Administration staff provided an overview on the Code of Conduct for electronic meetings.

5. UPDATE ON THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT
The Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations summarized water data results from the City website. A private testing company runs the tests twice a month and the City receives the results.

It was noted the Arsenic levels are rising slightly and that staff will be keeping a close eye on this. The two (2) key test results are of Manganese and Arsenic and they are below the Guideline limit. The City will be regenerating the filters again when the

Arsenic levels get up to two (2) mg/L. The most recent test results for Manganese are less than one (1) mg/L which is below the detection limit.

There was concern raised on the cost of regenerating the filters. It was clarified that the funding is already in the budget for the water rates calculation which was previously approved by Council.

6. DISCUSSION ON WATER RATES

The Director of Financial Services attended the meeting and provided an overview on the Water Utility 2021 Rates report dated November 23, 2020 that was provided to Council. She clarified the differences between water rates and rate structure design and noted the rate structure would be designed with input from the Panel. The rates must be incorporated into the Financial Plan to make sure the utility operates and supports itself through the user rates, maintenance, operations and reserves.

The Water Utility 2021 Rates report was further summarized, and a background was provided on the financials that were included in the November 23 report.

It was noted the City is looking for input from the Panel on ways to set the rate structure to be equitable to all users with a consumption-based component providing an incentive for users to lower their water usage.

Concerns were raised by the panel about the increase in water rates and the water utility long-term debt. It was questioned if there were funds available from elsewhere to fund the water utility. It was clarified that funds can only be borrowed from other funds if the funds are available and that they would have to be paid back with interest.

The Director of Financial Services clarified that the water utility would have to fund itself. As per the November 23 report, the City will have to have annual rate increases of 6.5% for 5 (five) years in order to build the reserves up for the utility. It was reiterated that the panel discussion topic for water rates involves moving from a structure that is using a different rate for different pipe sizes of connections to moving towards a rates that would have a fixed-cost that is the same for all users across the board, including some regular fixed costs, that is the same for all users, and ideas on how to implement this.

A member of the Panel expressed they would like to incorporate a fixed-base rate structure that is equitable for all users that takes in account the charge for each unit in a multi-complex as a base for the unit and incorporate the usage of the water to raise the remainder of the money that is needed for the budget.

Staff noted they understood the Panel's desire to move away from the current structure which has variable rates with different pipe sizes to moving towards one fixed cost but there are different ways of doing this that may not be fair or equitable. Staff noted there are two (2) ways to look at fixed costs, by account and by unit. It was also noted the final rate structure is not developed yet as there are changing variables that need to be built into the model in order to come up with rates and impacts. It was further noted by staff that the rates should promote water conservation and be equitable to relate to the

cost of the service. It was also noted it would be beneficial to have an incentive to encourage residents to limit their water usage.

The Panel discussed having a report come forward on implementing a rate structure that would charge for water consumption on top of a fixed rate for the next meeting. Staff confirmed it would not be possible to bring a report forward on this by the next meeting due to their workload, however they may be able to bring something forward late February.

2020-WCAP-035

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel recommend that Council direct staff to bring forward a report, to the next meeting, on the implementation of charging for water consumption on top of a fixed rate where the rest of the billing would be based on consumption.

DEFEATED

S. Johnson, D. Bower and I. Lessner voted in the negative

Action item: Staff to provide information on consumption and fixed rate structure models for the Water Community Advisory Panel Meeting on March 9, 2021.

7. LATEST WATER BILL

Vice-Chairperson Jones requested this item be added to the agenda for discussion. There were concerns raised with the deadline date, City Hall closure dates and grace period. Staff clarified the information and confirmed that required corrections were included and attached to the agenda package.

There was an additional concern noted regarding water meter replacements. It was suggested that communication on this (through a notice or on the water bill) would be helpful to make residents aware of the change. Staff confirmed they will review this and work with the communication department. It was also noted by staff that this may not be appropriate to add to the water bill but they will investigate the possibility of a notice drop-off when water meters are replaced.

8. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Vice-Chairperson Jones requested this item be added to the agenda for discussion. There was concern raised with the annual statement and a pamphlet for the water bill and that neither was provided to the panel prior to distribution. In addition, it was noted the November 23, 2020 Water Rates report and the water budget for Council was not provided to the panel prior to going to Council.

The Council Liaison clarified the Panel function is not an oversight of all things related to water, not everything would come to this Panel. It was further clarified by staff that the panel does not pre-approve but provides advice to Council as per the Terms of Reference.

Action item: Staff to Advise the panel when future water-related documentation is expected to go to Council so the panel can review the agenda for information purposes.

- 2020-WCAP-036 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel meeting be extended by fifteen minutes.
CARRIED
D. Stonoga voted in the negative

9. OTHER BUSINESS
None

10. INFORMATION
The Action Tracking Document was provided to the Panel for information.

11. WATER COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL MEETINGS

- 2020-WCAP-037 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel adopt the 2021 meeting schedule as presented:

- January 12;
- February 9; and,
- March 9.

CARRIED

12. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON FOR 2021 (JANUARY-MARCH 31)

- 2020-WCAP-038 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel appoint the following member as Chairperson for the remainder of the Panel term (January – March 31, 2021):
Ken Jones

CARRIED

- 2020-WCAP-039 **IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED**
THAT the Water Community Advisory Panel appoint the following member as Vice-Chairperson for the remainder of the Panel term (January – March 31, 2021):
Dorothy Bower

CARRIED

13. CONCLUSION OF THE DECEMBER 15, 2020 WATER COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL MEETING
The Chairperson declared the meeting concluded at 6:12 p.m.

S. Johnson, Chairperson

K. Sidhu, Committee Clerk