

Proposed Services Fees and Charges

The Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002, and related regulations require municipalities to make plans to ensure long term financial sustainability of their drinking water systems. Water and wastewater rates are established and approved by the County, with current rates authorized under By-Law No. 5903-2017. This by-law establishes the water and wastewater rates for all Oxford County systems for 2017-2020. Additionally, there are a number of water and wastewater service related fees and charges approved in the County's Fees and Charges By-law No.4889-2007, which is subject to annual review and amendment.

Through a review of administrative charges utilized by the County compared to fees and charges employed by other municipalities, staff propose to introduce certain fees that will relieve some of the upward pressures on the water and/or wastewater rates in the future while ensuring fairness and equity in rates are maintained for financially sustainable systems.

Proposed new service fees are included in the revised Fees and Charges By-Law schedule attached. The following are highlights of the proposed new charges:

- **Change in Occupancy Charge - \$15.00** – Represents a one-time cost recovery charge for time to set up an account
- **Transfer to Property Taxes – \$25.00** – Represents cost recovery for County staff time to send notices to property owner, and area municipalities, including postage and mailing costs associated with notices. Area municipalities may also have an administrative charge for their involvement in applying the arrears to the tax roll. Combining the area municipal charge, plus the County's charge would be roughly equal to the charge to turn on and off water service.
- **Standby Charge – \$25.85** - this charge is discussed in detail in the section below entitled Vacancies.
- **Interest Rate – Hydro Regulation, currently 1.5%** - Interest rate charged on overdue accounts is not a new charge and is set by the billing providers through their hydro regulation and, for transparency, is added to the By-law. The County's interest rate and the billing agents' interest rates differ slightly, however it is not a significant variance. The County's policy, which is the same as the area municipalities' interest rate for tax arrears is 1.25% per month, with the billing agents being 1.5% per month. This revenue is retained by the County or by the area municipality once the arrears are added to the tax roll.
- **NSF – Billing Agent, currently \$15** - NSF charged for payments returned or declined by the bank. This is not a new charge, however it is set by the billing providers and, for transparency, added to the By-law. This revenue is retained by the Billing Agent to offset banking fees charged.
- **Missed Appointments - \$55.00** – This fee is proposed to be charged to customers who have a set appointment for a service call, and are not at the property at the scheduled appointment time. This fee is to reimburse for lost productivity of the operator's time to attend the property for which time would have been spent on other operational maintenance issues.

- **Annual Private Unmetered Connection for Fire Protection - \$60 - \$900 depending on meter size** - This is the annual charge for each private unmetered connection made to the Water Systems to supply private fire hydrants in a prorated monthly charge. The County does not perform regular maintenance on these hydrants, therefore any repairs and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the property owner. This fee is in recognition for the benefit of having ready access to water supply available to the property by covering a portion of the system's fixed operating cost.
- **Frozen Services – \$100 per hour or \$145 per hour after regular business hours** - Currently the County does not charge for this service, however some municipalities bill for thawing water services, and others do not offer this service at all. Thawing privately owned water services one-time shall be attempted at the County's expense. Any additional thawing of privately owned water services shall be the Owner's responsibility and expense at the proposed applicable charge.

Schedule of Fees and Charges

Effective March 1, 2020

| Description of Fee or Charge | Notes | Draft Rate March 1, 2020 | HST Rate | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Water and Wastewater Billing Fees | | | | |
| Change in Occupancy | | \$15.00 | | each occurrence |
| Water Certificate | | per billing agent | | each occurrence |
| Transfer of Arrears to Property Taxes | | \$25.00 | | each occurrence |
| Standby Charge - Water | | \$17.10 | | per month |
| Standby Charge - Wastewater | | \$8.75 | | per month |
| Non-sufficient Funds Charge - Water and Wastewater Billing | | per billing agent | | per occurrence |
| Interest on Overdue Accounts - Water and Wastewater Billing | | per billing agent | | per month |
| Water and Wastewater | | | | |
| W/WW Operator - Missed Appointment | | \$55.00 | | each occurrence |
| Frozen Services - Thawing | * | \$100.00 | | per hour (min 1 hour) |
| Frozen Services - Thawing - after hours | * | \$145.00 | | per hour (min 1 hour) |
| <i>Annual Private Unmetered Connection for Fire Hydrants</i> | | | | |
| 2" and less | | \$60.00 | | per year |
| Greater than 2" but less than 6" | | \$300.00 | | per year |
| Greater than 6" | | \$900.00 | | per year |
| Notes | | | | |
| * | First occurrence at no charge | | | |