



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** March 20, 2020
From: John Irving, P.Eng., MPA **File:** 10-6000-01/2019-Vol 01
 General Manager, Engineering & Public Works
 Andrew Nazareth
 General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services

Re: **Utility Amendment Bylaws – Utility Billing Due Date Amendment**

Staff Recommendation

1. That each of the following bylaws be introduced and given first, second, and third readings:
 - a) Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, Amendment Bylaw No. 10168;
 - b) Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551, Amendment Bylaw No. 10169; and
 - c) Solid Waste & Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803, Amendment Bylaw No. 10170.

That staff be authorized to advertise the proposed bylaw amendments and a corresponding extension to the 2020 flat rate utility bill due date in anticipation of bylaw adoption.

Jerry Chong, CPA, CA
 Director, Finance
 (604-276-4064)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Solid Waste and Recycling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:	APPROVED BY CAO
N/A		

Staff Report

Origin

Property owners in Richmond receive utility bills for water, sewer, solid waste and recycling, and flood protection services. The City's Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551, and Solid Waste and Recycling Bylaw No. 6803 specify due dates for metered and flat rate utility bills and offer a 10% discount for bills paid before the due date.

This report presents proposed bylaw amendments to allow flexibility for extending due dates in response to emergency situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #1, A Safe and Resilient City:

Enhance and protect the safety and well-being of Richmond.

1.2 Future-proof and maintain city infrastructure to keep the community safe.

1.3 Ensure Richmond is prepared for emergencies, both human-made and natural disasters.

Analysis

2020 Utility Bill Due Date

Flat rate utility bills were mailed to property owners in February 2020 and are currently due on March 31, 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff recommend extending the invoice due date for flat rate utility bills to accommodate those who are unable to make payment at this time. This allows the early payment discount of 10% to be applied to all utility bills paid on or before the extended due date.

Metered utility bills are issued quarterly, with 2020 first quarter invoices scheduled to be issued in May 2020 and due in June 2020. It is unknown at this time whether these dates will be affected by COVID-19.

Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Existing bylaws indicates that flat rate bills are due by the date specified on the invoice, and metered bills are due approximately one month from the date of the invoice. Staff recommend amending the bylaws to provide the General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services with the authority to extend invoice due dates as required, particularly in the case of extraordinary circumstances such as the current outbreak.

Communication of Proposed Changes

Flat rate utility bills are currently due on March 31, 2020. If the proposed bylaw amendments are acceptable to Council, staff recommend advertising the proposed amendments and a corresponding extension of the flat rate due date to June 30, 2020 immediately, in anticipation of bylaw adoption, to provide residents with notice of the proposed changes.

Richmond residents would be notified through a news release, social media, and the City's website. Through these communication efforts, property owners will also be encouraged to pay utility bills remotely using one of the following options:

- Online or telephone banking through a financial institution;
- Online through the City's website using a credit card (service fee applies);
- Mail cheques to Richmond City Hall; or
- Drop cheque in 24 Hour Drop Box at Richmond City Hall.

Financial Impact

Extending the invoice due date for flat rate utility bills may result in reduced revenues for the Water Utility, Sewer Utility, Solid Waste & Recycling Utility and Drainage and Diking Utility. The estimated revenue impact is approximately \$100,000 for each utility. There is adequate funding available within each provision accounts to accommodate this revenue shortfall without impacting future utility rates.

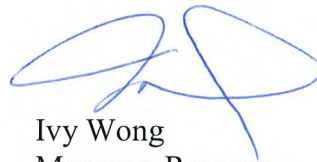
The proposed bylaw amendments also allow future extensions of billing due dates. Staff will keep Council informed of impacts if significant extensions are required due to extraordinary events.

Conclusion

Amending the bylaws provides flexibility for the General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services to extend utility invoice due dates during extraordinary times. If the proposed bylaws are adopted, staff recommend extending the 2020 flat rate utility due date to June 30, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and provide residents with advance notice of the anticipated change.



Jason Ho, P.Eng.
Manager, Engineering Planning
(604-244-1281)



Ivy Wong
Manager, Revenue
(604-276-4046)

- Att. 1: Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, Amendment Bylaw No. 10168
2: Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551, Amendment Bylaw No. 10169
3: Solid Waste & Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803, Amendment Bylaw No. 10170



Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, Amendment Bylaw No. 10168

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

- 1. The Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, as amended, is further amended:
a) By deleting Sections 13 (b) and 13 (c) and replacing them with the following:
(b) Every owner of a property which does not have a metered water service will be invoiced annually...
(c) All invoices specified in (b) must be paid prior to the invoice due date.

b) By adding the following definition under PART I – INTERPRETATION

GENERAL MANAGER, FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES means the person appointed to the position of General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services, and includes a person designated as an alternate

2. This Bylaw is cited as "Waterworks and Water Rates Bylaw No. 5637, Amendment Bylaw No. 10168".

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

Four horizontal lines for signatures corresponding to the reading stages.

Approval stamp: CITY OF RICHMOND, APPROVED for content by originating dept. JAH, APPROVED for legality by Solicitor JAH

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER



**Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551,
Amendment Bylaw No. 10169**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. The **Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551**, as amended, is further amended:

a) By deleting Section 2.4 and replacing it with the following:

2.4 Date of User and Flood Protection System Fee Payments

2.4.1 All **sanitary sewer** system user fees and all **flood protection system** fees must be paid on or before the invoice due date.

2.4.2 Extensions to the invoice due date may be granted at the discretion of the **General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services**.

b) By adding the following definition under **PART FIVE – INTERPRETATION**

**GENERAL MANAGER,
FINANCE &
CORPORATE SERVICES**

means the person appointed to the position of General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services, and includes a person designated as an alternate

1. This Bylaw is cited as “**Drainage, Dyke and Sanitary Sewer System Bylaw No. 7551, Amendment Bylaw No. 10169**”.

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED for content by originating dept.
<i>JH</i>
APPROVED for legality by Solicitor
<i>JH</i>



**Solid Waste & Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803, Amendment
Bylaw No. 10170**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. The Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803, as amended, is further amended:

a) By adding subsection 11.1 (c) as follows:

(c) Extensions to the invoice due date may be granted at the discretion of the General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services.

b) By adding the following definition under **PART FIFTEEN – INTERPRETATION:**

**GENERAL MANAGER,
FINANCE &
CORPORATE SERVICES**

means the person appointed to the position of General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services, and includes a person designated as an alternate

2. This Bylaw is cited as “Solid Waste & Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803, Amendment Bylaw No. 10170”.

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED for content by originating dept. 
APPROVED for legality by Solicitor 

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER