

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF May 26, 2009

Item 1, Report No. 5, of the Budget Committee, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on May 26, 2009.

1 WATER AND WASTEWATER RATE STUDY – PRESENTATION

The Budget Committee recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager, the Deputy City Manager/Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services, the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Public Works and the Director of Financial Services, dated May 22, 2009:

Recommendation

The City Manager, the Deputy City Manager/Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services, the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Public Works and the Director of Financial Services recommend:

That the following report and presentation on the rate study by Watson and Associates be received.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact to this report

Communications Plan

Not Applicable

Purpose

To receive a presentation and update from Watson and Associates on the water and wastewater rate study.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is comprehensive in its legislative requirements and was enacted to place all legislation and regulations relating to the treatment and distribution of drinking water into one Act. The SDWA expands on existing policy and practices and introduces new regulations to protect drinking water. It includes certification of drinking water system operators and analysts and puts in place certain financial reporting requirements and the need for municipalities to develop financially sustainable water treatment and distribution systems.

To address the above legislative requirements the City undertook a full cost review of the water and sewer operations and infrastructure life cycle requirements. A RFP process to hire a consultant was conducted. The review of the current and future operating and capital infrastructure needs would be over a 25 year period. The infrastructure replacement timeframes and costs were to be determined and from this data full cost consumption rates could be developed. Also required was the development of funding options and rate strategies that would provide options to move to full cost recovery.

Rate Study Objectives

Through the RFP process a contract was awarded to Watson and Associates who partnered with the engineering firm AECOM.

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The rate study objectives:

- 1) A full cost review of water, wastewater and storm services
- 2) Identify current and future water, wastewater, storm sewer capital needs over the assets lifecycle
- 3) Identify cost recovery options for both capital and operational needs
- 4) An analysis of lifecycle reserve fund requirements to provide financial sustainability
- 5) Recommend user rates to recover full costs for water, wastewater and storm services
- 6) Provide the Capital Asset Financial Evaluator (“CAFÉ”) model to the City for ongoing long range financial planning

This past year the consultants have collaborated with staff from Engineering, Public Works and Finance to develop the underground piping infrastructure capital/rehabilitation data and the financial operating components necessary to populate the rate modelling software.

The Study Process

AECOM began the study with a review of the City's linear and vertical infrastructure inventory for suitability and completeness of data. After the review the underground piping systems for water, wastewater and storm sewer were broken out by groups based on unit replacement costs, type of material, age, diameter, system length, estimated service life etc. From this data the estimated timeline for capital replacement or major rehabilitation was determined over a 100 year period. This data was used to populate the “CAFÉ” modelling software. This modelling software allows a statistical approach to the annual projection of current and long term replacement costs also called lifecycle costs.

The next step in the study was the development of the rates by Watson and Associates that would be at a full cost recovery level. This was accomplished by incorporating the above capital replacement cost data with the estimated operating data into the model. The aforementioned operating cost data included growth estimates, consumption estimates, revenue projections, regional water and wastewater service cost estimates, system maintenance costs, overheads and administration costs, etc. The data population of the model is now complete and the appropriate rates necessary to provide sufficient funds to meet the operating and lifecycle costs over the review period can be determined.

The study was also to include recommendations in the use of various rate options including flat rates and rate smoothing techniques so as provide a more effective and affordable rate structure.

The City will retain the licensing rights without charge to the “CAFÉ” modelling software. Staff will then be able to maintain and update the model as the City grows and capital needs change over time thereby continuing to provide updated rates. In addition the modelling software will provide the opportunity to look at other rate methodologies and options for use in the future.

Water and Wastewater Budgets

In order to meet the requirements for a sustainable water and wastewater distribution system, the City has undertaken a review of its water and wastewater infrastructure, operating costs, and lifecycle costs. Although not yet complete, sufficient data has been obtained to assist in the setting of the 2009 rates. Through the findings generated from this review, and the ongoing use of the CAFÉ model, the City will be able to ensure that sufficient funds are generated through the user rates to meet this legislative requirement.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

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Regional Implications

There are no implications

Conclusion

To receive the presentation and update from Watson and Associates on the City's consumption rate study.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Director of Financial Services
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Purpose

To adopt the water and wastewater operating budgets and the corresponding consumption rates. The annual water rate increase is 6.0% and wastewater rate increase is 12.2% both rates incorporating Regional increases, City operating, maintenance and infrastructure increases. The combined rate increase is 9.1% of which 6.1% is attributable to Regional rate increases. The consumption rates are supported by the current rate study and are now moving in the direction of full cost recovery. However the consumption rates are still very competitive as demonstrated on Attachment No. 2.

Background Analysis and Options

2009 WATER AND WASTEWATER PROPOSED CONSUMPTION RATES

The major source of revenue for water and wastewater operations is consumption rates, totalling \$71.0 million for 2009. The consumption rate revenues net of operating costs are transferred to the respective water and wastewater reserves. These funds provide for the delivery of clean potable water and wastewater services that includes on going infrastructure maintenance, administration, financing, overhead costs and reserve funds for the future rehabilitation of the City's underground infrastructure.

The proposed 2009 water and wastewater budgets are attached including the unaudited 2008 actuals. The water and wastewater operating and capital actual expenditure activity form part of the City's consolidated Financial Statements.

The following attachments are included: 2009 water and wastewater budgets including the unaudited 2008 Actuals Attachment No. 1, the Municipal Rate Comparison Attachment No. 2, the Wastewater & Drainage 2009 Business Plan, Attachment No. 3, the Resource Request - Water Attachment No. 4, the Resource Request - Wastewater Attachment No. 5.

Annual Residential Impact

The 2009 budgets include an annual rate increase of 6.0% for water and a 12.2% increase for wastewater for a combined increase of 9.1%.

The year over year rate increases impact is:

- The Regional increase of 10% for the cost of potable water and the increase in wastewater services at 10.0%. This increase is based on Regional water and wastewater reserve adequacy study.
- Increase in the contribution to the wastewater reserve
- Reduction in the contribution to the water reserve
- To offset the impact of inflationary pressures.
- Increases in operational service level activity and administration, financing and other expenditures.

2009 COMBINED RATE INCREASE

Potable Water & Wastewater Purchased Services	6.1%	York Region
Unmetered Water	0.3%	
Maintenance	1.2%	
Administration & Finance & Overheads	1.4%	
Joint Services	0.3%	
Infrastructure Contribution	(0.2)%	
2009 Increase	9.1%	

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The residential customer with a consumption of 300 cubic meters of water per annum will see an increase of \$50 or 9.1%. The combined increase for water, wastewater represents a \$4.17 per month increase.

Rate Components - Increase

The largest cost component of the consumption rate is the purchase of potable water and wastewater services from the Region as shown below. Wastewater purchased services in particular have gone up over the past number of years by 10%. This year water also increased by 10% both increases due to the need to build reserves for future Regional infrastructure requirements.

The City like the Region needs to build reserves for the future. The most significant component of the proposed consumption rates is "Contribution to Reserves". These are the funds that are transferred to the reserves each year for the future water & wastewater infrastructure replacement. The consumption rates are now supported by the study and are now moving in the direction of full cost recovery.

The 2009 water and wastewater rate components and cost impacts are as follows:

Rate Components	Water	Wastewater	Combined
Regional Purchased Services	57.6 ¢	65.3 ¢	122.9 ¢
Unmetered Water	7.0	0	7.0
Maintenance	11.2	13.5	24.7
Other	9.7	5.4	15.1
Contribution to Reserves	12.5	18.0	30.5
Total	98.0 ¢	102.2 ¢	200.2 ¢

Cost increase impact

	Water	Wastewater	Combined
Region	94%	53%	67%
City	6%	47%	33%

SDWA – Licensing Requirements

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is comprehensive in its legislative requirements and was enacted to place all legislation and regulations relating to the treatment and distribution of drinking water into one Act. The SDWA expands on existing policy and practices and introduces new regulations to protect drinking water. It includes certification of drinking water system operators and analysts and puts in place certain financial reporting requirements and the need for municipalities to develop financially sustainable water treatment and distribution systems. The City embarked on a rate study that will determine full cost recovery rates.

Rate Study

The City undertook an RFP process for consulting services and a contract was awarded to Watson and Associates who partnered with an engineering firm AECOM. Watson and AECOM undertook a full review of water, wastewater and storm services that would result in recommendations that would over time move consumption rates to a full cost recovery level. This past year the consultants have collaborated with staff from Engineering, Public Works and Finance to develop data to input into a consumption rate model. This data included asset replacement costs, replacement timelines, growth levels, consumption levels, revenue projections, operational cost projections, etc for the period 2008 to 2033, a 25 year forecast period.

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The rate study objectives:

- 1) A full cost review of water, wastewater and storm services
- 2) Identify current and future water, wastewater, storm sewer capital needs over the assets lifecycle
- 3) Identify cost recovery options for both capital and operational needs
- 4) An analysis of lifecycle reserve fund requirements to provide financial sustainability
- 5) Recommend user rates to recover full costs for water, wastewater and storm services
- 6) Provide an Excel based Capital Asset Financial Evaluator (“CAFÉ”) model to the City for ongoing long range financial planning

The rate study is ongoing but is near completion at this point.

Conservation

The Water for Tomorrow program undertaken by the Region of York continues to provide programs and initiatives to reduce the consumption and loss of drinking water. The latest initiatives is a water efficient toilet rebate program where single family home owners in York Region purchasing an eligible water efficient toilet on or after May 1st can receive a \$75 rebate for a maximum five toilets per location. In addition, the program continues to offer water efficient landscape visits and industrial/commercial water audits to encourage water consumers to conserve water use and assists in reducing energy consumption and their carbon footprint.

Public Works continues to refine its flushing programs to reduce water flushed from the system to ensure water quality. The banding of hydrants has reduced theft and encourages water haulers to source water from one of the City's four water filling stations. The anode protection program initiated in 2005 to reduce corrosion in iron water mains continues to perform very well yielding a 50% decrease in the number of water main breaks in the water distribution system.

2009 Proposed Water and Wastewater Budget – Highlights

Unmetered Water Consumption

Unmetered water usage takes place through: fire suppression and fire training, irrigating sports fields, main flushing and maintenance, street sweeping, water main breaks and service leaks, testing and flushing water mains in new developments due to Provincial water regulations, water used by builders in the construction of new homes, etc.

Unmetered water is recovered through the City's development agreements and is also billed and recovered internally for City purposes; such as recreation's swimming pools, and consumption in the many building's and facilities throughout the City.

2009 Proposed Budget – Unmetered Water

The 2009 unmetered water is budgeted at 11% same as last year. The unmetered water loss for 2008 is 14.0% and is the result of continued need to flush water mains in new subdivisions. Flushing maintains the City's ability to provide potable water thereby meeting Ministry of Environment requirements. Some of the cost is recovered from fees in the subdivision agreements. The actual unmetered water over the past number of years ranges from 9.3% to 14.0% reflecting the growth of the City. The National Drinking Water Clearinghouse in the USA has indicated that water unaccounted for in the 10 - 20% range is considered normal, while the National Research Council of Canada reported in 1998, that the range is anywhere from 25 - 30%.

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Update 2000 – Unmetered Water

As reported previously to Council, the 2000 actual unmetered water was significantly higher than normal coming in at an adjusted 16.0%. City Engineering and Finance staff have met on several occasions with Regional engineering staff, and in addition, have had a number of discussions and meetings with staff of the City of Toronto on potential metering issues. The water infrastructure system is large and the metering system is complex. In 2002 the Region hired a consultant with the cost being shared with the City; however the resulting report was inclusive in its determination of the cause.

At the June 5th 2008 meeting of the Finance and Administration Regional Committee a recommendation was put forward that staff negotiate a resolution to the water billing issue between the City of Vaughan and the Region.

Staff are in the process of preparing a report that provides a recommendation to resolve this outstanding issue with the Region.

Water- Revenue & Expenditure Highlights

Additional Financial Resource Requests – Water

For 2009, 3 additional Resource requests have been submitted and the funds are included in the Water budget, Attachment #3. These requests are for additional funds to maintain and update the Drinking Water Quality Management Standards relating to the City's drinking water licences. Additional funds to complete a network analysis of the City's water distribution system to determine areas where improvement maybe required; thereby maintaining an efficient distribution system. Additional funds to inspect and service the City's fire hydrants in accordance with the fire code. These additional financial resource requests do not involve additional staff.

Rate Study – Water

The recommended water rate of 98.0 cents per cubic meter is based on the proposed operating and capital budgets and represents a move in the direction of full cost recovery as supported by the preliminary rate study.

The above water rate is based on the optional rate provisions in the study that recommends smoothing consumption rates over a period of time. This approach is possible for two reasons, the City's current water reserve is at a reasonable funding level and the water infrastructure is relatively young therefore providing time to build the reserve. Both of these factors provide the opportunity to bring the water rate to full cost recovery over an extended time frame. The water rate has been smoothed over a 10 year period and thereby lessening the year over year fluctuations that would otherwise occur due to the infrastructure replacement timelines. Based on the required estimated capital asset replacement value over the 10 year period the full recovery water rate is 158 cents.

2009 Budget Factors

The budgeted 2009 water billing revenue includes a 2.0 % (3.25% 2008) residential, 1.25 % (2.0% 2008) commercial growth factor and a 6.0% water rate increase. The consumption volume is based on the above growth and an estimated average season in terms of rain fall. Weather in terms of rainfall is difficult to predict therefore the consumption figures are determined based on a conservative basis. Increases in expenditures include the Regional cost of potable water at 10%, inflationary increases related to wages, purchased goods and services, increases in operational service areas and the rate study as it pertains to the appropriate funding contribution level for the reserve.

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Highlights - 2009 Proposed Budget

The budgeted water billings in 2009 include a 6% rate increase and an increase residential and commercial growth. The revenues are expected to be \$35.5 million with water purchases from the Region at \$23.3 million including water loss resulting in a gross margin of \$12.1 million. This year budgeted consumption levels are developed using a more conservative approach in terms of weather. Other revenue for bulk water sales is budgeted lower than last year's level at \$0.2 million. Installation activity is expected to be similar to last years budgeted level at \$1.1 million.

2009 budgeted expenditures total \$9.0 million covering maintenance, administration, financing, overhead and other costs up by 9.8% over last years budget. The largest component is the maintenance and is budgeted at \$5.4 million up by 5.4% due to an increase in maintenance levels related to hydrants. Administration is budgeted at \$1.2 million up by 27.4% due to new complement that was approved in last year's budget. Other costs are up mainly due to an increase in the transfer to the revenue fund as it relates to overhead allocation costs. The balance of the costs is similar to last years budgeted level.

Highlights - 2008 Actual

Actual 2008 total Water billings of \$31.8 million are under budget significantly by \$3.4 million as a result of significant rainfall through out the spring and summer period. The volume of rain in this period increased by 156% when compared to the same period last year. Residential billings at \$19.2 million were down by 10.5% and Commercial at \$12.4 million down by 9.9% when compared to budget. Bulk sales were also down by \$0.2 million. Installation services at \$1.0 million were also down due to less than expected activity.

Actual maintenance expenditures came in at \$3.8 million under budget by \$1.3 million. Maintenance is under budget each year as a result of extra funds being provided due to possible emergency work. Administration came in at \$0.8 million and is under slightly due to gapping as staff approved last year were hired later than expected, the balance of expenditures came in to close to budget.

Water Reserve Fund Activity

In 2008 through water operations, the net of all revenues and costs resulted in \$4.6 million (\$4.9M 2007) being transferred to the water reserve. The transfer is down by \$1.1 million as indicated previously due to excessive rain fall in the summer months resulting in a lower water demand.

The 2009 budgeted transfer from water operations to the water reserve is \$4.3 million. These funds will provide for the future requirements of the water infrastructure. The forecasted Capital drawdown of the reserve in 2009 for water related infrastructure needs is expected to be \$3.4 million.

Committed capital costs represent approved capital projects not yet begun or completed and total \$3.2 million, these projects will be completed over the next couple of years.

The budgeted reserve balance at the end of 2009 is projected to be \$18.3 million (2008 actual \$17.3m) after committed capital projects a net increase of \$1.0 million. These funds will provide for the future requirements of the water infrastructure.

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Wastewater- Revenue & Expenditure Highlights

Additional Financial Resource Request – Waste Water

At its meeting of December 8, 2008, Council approved a number of recommendations contained in the “Summer 2008 Rainstorm Update” report. One of these recommendations was, *“Staff report back to Council by June 30, 2009 regarding a potential backflow valve installation rebate program with proposed details of this program and potential funding sources.”*

On May 5, 2009, Council approved the Back-water Valve Installation Subsidy program, subject to a by-law for the program being developed and passed, and the funding being approved through the 2009 Water/Wastewater Budget.

The approved subsidy is based on having an annual maximum funding cap of \$112,500, to be funded from the Wastewater Reserve. Based on a maximum subsidy of \$750 per property, the City can approve 150 applications per year, if all received the maximum subsidy. Once the annual funding amount has been exhausted, those homeowners approved to receive a subsidy would have to wait until the following year to receive their subsidy, based on available funding being approved through the budget process. Depending on the uptake of this program, the program cap amount may have to be adjusted annually through this budget process.

The back-water valve installation subsidy may provide some financial assistance to homeowners who have experienced flooding as a result of a sewer back-up, and have installed back-water valves. It will also assist those residents who wish to install such devices to help prevent future basement flooding issues as a result of a sewer back-up.

While such a device significantly reduces the risk of basement flooding from sanitary sewer back-ups, there is no guarantee that basement flooding will never occur again, even after the installation of such a valve. The funds necessary for this program have been included in the 2009 Wastewater budget.

Rate Study-Wastewater

The recommended wastewater rate of 102.2 cents is based on the proposed operating and capital budgets and represents a move in the direction of full cost recovery as supported by the preliminary findings of the rate study.

The above rate is based on provisions in the study that recommends smoothing consumption rates over a period of time. This approach is possible for two reasons, the City’s wastewater reserve is currently at a reasonable funding level and the wastewater infrastructure is relatively young therefore providing time to build the reserve. Both of these factors provide the opportunity to bring

the wastewater rate to full cost recovery over an extended time frame. The wastewater rate has been smoothed out over a 10 year period thereby lessening the year over year fluctuations that would otherwise occur due to the varying water infrastructure replacement timelines. Based on the required estimated capital asset replacement value over the 10 year period the full cost recovery wastewater rate is 153 cents and sewer services 55 cents.

Staff will be looking at various rate options outlined in the study to more effectively fund storm sewer services.

Wastewater Budget Factors

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The budgeted 2009 wastewater billing revenue includes a 2.0 % (3.25% 2008) residential, 1.25% (2.0% 2008) commercial growth factor and a 12.2% wastewater rate increase. The volume of wastewater is not metered. The consumption volume is based on water sold to the consumer. Cost increases include the rate increase in the Regional cost of wastewater services at 10%, increases to City's operational, administration, etc costs and the infrastructure contribution to the reserve that is required to fund future capital needs now based on the rate study.

Discount Eliminated

The discount between the water rate and wastewater rate has been diminishing over the past number of years. This is due to the Regional wastewater services costs increasing over the past six years by 10%, the City can only pass on these costs down to the consumer. As a result there is no longer a discount for wastewater when compared to the water rate.

Highlights - 2008 Actual and 2009 Budget

The budgeted wastewater billings in 2009 are expected to reach \$35.7 million with the expected wastewater services from the Region at \$25.9 million leaving a gross margin of \$9.7 million. The increase in revenues is a reflection of growth factors of 2.0 % (3.25% 2008) for residential and 1.25 % (2.0%) for commercial and an estimated average season in terms of rain fall and a rate increase of 12.2%. The above cost of wastewater disposal service from the Region includes a 10.0% increase. The Region's treatment cost for wastewater is based on potable water purchased by the City. Other revenues budgeted at \$0.4 million are similar to last years level. The 2008 local improvement revenue is budgeted at \$213,200 and is offset by the cost of debentures of \$213,200. Installation and service fees are budgeted at \$0.2 million down slightly from last year's budgeted level.

Actual 2008 total wastewater billings of \$30.3 million are under budget significantly by \$3.1 million. Wastewater revenue is based on water consumption therefore is under budget due to an excessive amount of rain fall in the spring and summer timeframe. As a result the demand by Residential users was reduced significantly. Residential actual billing totalled \$18.2 million, down by 11.5% and Commercial and Industrial actual billings totalled \$12.1 million down by 8.2% when compared to budget. Other revenues at \$0.4 million are higher than expected due to installation revenue coming in at \$0.2 million higher due to increased activity.

2009 Budgeted expenditures total \$7.3 million covering maintenance, administration, storm sewer financing, joint services, overhead and other costs are up by 10.5% over last years budget. The largest component is the sanitary sewer maintenance costs budgeted at \$3.1 million up by 7.8%. This increase is due to costs associated with lateral repairs, sanitary lateral installations, flushing/cleaning and other general repairs, maintenance, servicing and joint service costs. Administration is budgeted at \$0.3 million up by 30.0% due to new complement that was approved in last year's budget. Storm sewer maintenance is budgeted at \$2.2 million up over last year by 10.0% reflecting increased maintenance levels. Other costs are up mainly due to an increase in the transfer to the revenue fund as it relates to overhead allocation costs. The balance of the costs is similar to last years budgeted level.

2008 Actual expenditures total \$5.9 million covering maintenance, administration, storm sewer, financing, overhead and other costs are down by 10.1% when compared to budget. Actual maintenance expenditures came in at \$2.5 million under budget by \$0.4 million. Administration came in at \$0.3 million and is over do staff that was approved last year. Storm sewer maintenance came in at \$1.6 million under budget by 22.2% as a result of less then expected activity. The balance of expenditures came in at budgeted levels

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Reserve Contribution

In 2008 through wastewater operations, the net of all revenues and costs resulted in \$3.1 million (\$3.2m 2007) being transferred to the water reserve fund.

The 2009 budgeted transfer of \$2.8 million from wastewater/storm operations to the reserve is higher at \$0.4 million over last year's budget. The capital drawdown of the reserve in 2009 for wastewater related infrastructure needs is expected to be small this year at \$0.4 million.

Committed capital a cost represent projects not yet begun or completed and totals \$0.9 million, these projects will be completed over the next couple of years.

The budgeted reserve balance at the end of 2009 is projected to be \$15.9 million after committed capital projects a net increase of \$2.5 million. These funds will provide for the future requirements of the wastewater infrastructure.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

Establishes the budget and resources required to maintain service levels and undertake Council priorities in this area.

Regional Implications

No Implications

Conclusion

Based on the current rate study review the City's water, wastewater rates are now moving towards full cost recovery. This approach will maintain a financially sustainable reserve for the future. Based on the proposed rate increase for water and a rate increase for wastewater the impact to the ratepayer that consumes 300 cubic meters per year will be approximately \$50.00 or \$4.17 per month.

It is therefore recommended that the City's water rate be increased to 98.0 cents per cubic meter and that the wastewater rate be increased to 102.2 cents per cubic meter both effective June 2009.

Attachments

- Attachment No. 1: The 2009 Water and Wastewater Budgets including 2008 unaudited Water and Wastewater Actuals
- Attachment No. 2: 2009 Water and Wastewater Municipal Rate Comparison
- Attachment No. 3: Water, Wastewater & Drainage 2009 Business Plan
- Attachment No. 4: Resource Requests - Water
- Attachment No. 5: Resource Request - Wastewater

Report prepared by:

Barry E. Jackson, CGA
Director of Financial Services
Ext. 8272

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)