

**Minutes of the Operational Review Committee  
Meeting Held  
Tuesday, September 6, 2016**

**Present:**

Councillor Maroosis, Committee Chair  
Councillor Anthony, Committee Member  
Councillor Bain, Committee Member (5:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m.)  
Councillor King, Committee Member  
Councillor Serran, Committee Member  
Mayor McDonald, Committee Member  
Councillor Mayne  
Councillor Forgette  
Lea Janisse, Interim Chief Administrative Officer  
John Severino, Managing Director Community Services  
David Euler, Managing Director of Engineering, Environmental Services and Works  
Margaret Karpenko, Chief Financial Officer  
Greg Saunders, Interim Fire Chief  
Jaclyn Bucik, Communications Officer

**Regrets:**

Gord Mulcahey, Executive Member North Bay Professional Firefighters' Association  
Brian Phillips, President CUPE Local 122

Special Review Committee Chair, George Maroosis, called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. Adoption of Minutes:  
The Minutes of August 22, 2016 were approved by the Committee and will be presented to Council on September 19, 2016.
2. Business Arising from Minutes:
  - Councillor Bain will provide Minutes and a Final Report of the 911 subcommittee at a future meeting.
3. Operational Review of Corporate Services.
  - Margaret Karpenko re: Financial Services. Copies of the presentations were provided to the Committee.
  - Water and Sewer Billing
  - Staffing:
    - The water clerks carry out 95% of the process.
    - Need more cross-training for the water clerk positions.
  - What We Do:
    - Transfer knowledge to Customer Service Centre.
    - Work with IT to print water bills.
    - Work with Public Works in relation to potential tampering of water meters.
    - Building Department provides water meter packages to new home builders.

- Is there an appeal process in place for individuals where, upon inspection, they have been deemed to have tampered with the meter?
  - Currently there is not an appeal process in place. To-date we have worked with the individuals and have never had to invoke the fine provision in the By-Law.
- Sections 13 and 14 of By-Law 2015-129, allows consumption credits – if an individual has a toilet that has been leaking the By-Laws allows for a one-time credit – the credit is calculated by using a three month average.
- The Water Clerks also process owner/tenant contracts. The Landlord executes a contract with the City indicating that the tenant is responsible for the water bill.
  - What is the length of the overdue water bill before it is transferred to taxes?
    - Three months but letters are sent in the interim.
  - Are the landlords advised that if the bill is delinquent it will be transferred to the taxes?
    - Yes – it is clearly set out in the contract.
  - In relation to the low flow toilet rebates if I have multiple properties is it per person or account?
    - It is one per account.
- Currently have maintenance agreements with Neptune and are currently looking at whether or not to continue with these agreements.
  - I pay my taxes automatically and when I went on line to sign up to have my water paid automatically I couldn't set it up. I had to come in to City Hall and bring in a cheque. This is not clear at all on the website.
    - Yes the person still has to come in. Will look at the website to see if it can be made clearer. At the Open House on September 8<sup>th</sup> a booth will be set up so individuals will have the opportunity to sign up for bill presentment.
- Water bill and due date complaints from seniors – seniors receive their CPP/Old Age on the 29<sup>th</sup> if the senior is set up on PAP. The majority of due dates are on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month. The one anomaly is when the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a Saturday. The CPP/Old Age is not credited into the account over the weekend but the debits are taken out. This only happens one month of the year.
  - If we did move the due date to the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month does that have any financial implications on the City?
    - No, the date can be set to whatever date we think is appropriate but we don't want to keep changing the due dates as that causes confusion.

- Would there be any difference if we put the due date to the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month?
  - Due dates can be changed. If you sign up for PAP you get a couple of days before the bill is due.
- Why can't we look at the calendar each year and determine the month that the deposit will be done on a Saturday and change that month's due date only?
  - That can be done.
- People are still wondering about the odd and even days for watering their lawns. Have we run into any trouble with the water?
  - The change was communicated to the public. The difference now is that you pay for what you use.
- Have we talked to North Bay Hydro to see if there are any efficiencies in having a joint hydro/water billing system?
  - Several years ago we had these discussions but at this point there are no cost savings to the City. Some municipalities do have the combined bill. In speaking with North Bay Hydro the trend now seems to be to separate the two bills.
- How does the City stack up against Hydro regarding paperless billing?
  - Considering the City has only been doing paperless billing for 2 months we are not doing too badly.

➤ Challenges:

- The estimated calculation for the residential consumption of 14 cubic metres is close.
  - Was the 14 cubic metres taken into account of the 20% reduction?
    - Yes
  - Have you seen the trends starting to go up?
    - We don't usually see that for five years.
- There are very few days during the month that tasks are not deadline driven.
  - Are you finding it challenging to produce a monthly water bill?
    - If the systems goes down or if we have a sick leave that is what triggers the challenges.
  - The greater take up of e-billing will reduce this pressure off of staff.
    - Yes.
  - Have you engaged our Communications person to help with getting the messaging out regarding e-billing?
    - Yes
  - Is there a way that we can find out exactly how much we spend on postage for the water bills?
    - Yes, we can get those figures for you.
- If we have a problem in Sungard it can slow down the process.
  - How much time does it take to fix the problem?

- It depends on the magnitude of the problem.
  - To-date the City has paid out \$10,000.00 for the Low Flow Rebate Program. Council had allotted \$100,000.00 in 2016 towards this program.
  - The Final Meter Reads have increased due to the installation of water meters at residential buildings.
  - E-Bill rebate is just under \$10,000.00.
  - Run Water Agreements – we do not currently have the trending analysis.
    - Could the City not do like Hydro and Natural Gas to true up only once a year?
      - We could do that but not right now as we do not have the trending analysis that we would require.
    - Could we not do an email blitz for all of the people that signed up for the Water Portal to encourage them to sign up for bill presentation?
      - We would have to look at how the water portal was set up in relation to anti-spam legislation.
      - Did a quick review of meter resizing – to date there have been 25 accounts – half of these accounts went down by one size.
    - How did people average out for fees?
      - Came down significantly.
    - The low flow toilet rebate for 2016 was set for \$100,000.00 how is that going to get to Council to renew the program for 2017?
      - It will be part of the 2017 budget process.
    - How many reading issues with the meters do you get on average?
      - We didn't look at this. There is still a section of the population that we have difficulties with and we are working through this with Neptune.
    - Do we still have people who do not have meters?
      - Yes and they are paying double or triple the bill.
    - Are the bills that are doubled or tripled being paid?
      - Yes.
    - It costs the City approximately \$116,000.00 a year in postage for the monthly water bills. Is it a possibility to do advertising on the bills to help subsidize the postage costs?
      - We only started the paperless campaign on June 30<sup>th</sup> and have really put together a full campaign as of yet.
- Accounting and Budgeting:
  - What We Do:
    - Working on Tender for Actuarial Services.
    - Working on RFP for Audit Services.
    - Working on RFP for Banking Services.
    - Perform audits and prepare Financial Statements for Holdco/Genco/Invest North Bay.
    - Do payroll for ABC's.

- Prepare mandatory reports for Stats Canada.
  - Should we be having discussions with DNSSAB to amalgamate financial services?
    - The City does not currently have capacity within financial services to accommodate DNSSAB.
  - Because DNSSAB has said that they are not an ABC and if they chose to leave the building, if we had combined services can this be provided to DNSSAB if they are at a remote site?
    - Yes.
  - Does Financial Services need more staff?
    - Not at this time we have the right amount.
- Challenges:
  - Two of the three payroll clerks can retire in the next year. Payroll system is out-dated.
  - Do not have the resources for collection of outstanding invoices.

4. Action Items:

- (i) Discuss with North Bay Hydro the possibility of combining the two utilities bills.
- (ii) The CFO to check to see how the Water Portal is currently set up re: anti-spam legislation.
- (iii) Provide the cost of postage for the water billings.
- (iv) Look at the possibility of sharing services with the ABC's.
- (v) Review the Security Plan for City Hall.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 12, 2016– 5:15 p.m.

Agenda Item: Engineering, Environmental Service and Public Works

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

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Councillor George Maroosis  
Chair Operational Review Committee

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Karen McIsaac  
City Clerk