

Utility Billing and Collections Project Update

Council Presentation

Committee of the Whole: October 7, 2025

Background

- In August 2021 Alectra advised that they would no longer complete water billing on behalf of the City of Guelph.
- In October 2024, staff confirmed that in house billing and collections was the best option as it aligned with the City's business objectives including cost efficiency, customer experience, leveraging existing technology, to ensure a smooth transition.

Current Status of Project

- The City is currently transitioning water billing and collections in-house using CentralSquare Technologies (CST) Utility Billing system. CST is currently used for the property tax billing and collections and the online customer portal.
- Staff are in the process of implementation, data validation and training on the new utility billing system to support in house billing and collections.

Current Status of Project, continued

- In-house billing cutover has been set for the end of May 2026.
- Staff are working diligently with Alectra to tax roll outstanding water arrears on Alectra accounts to reduce the overall arrears balance prior to the cutover in May 2026. Collecting these outstanding amounts for services already provided is essential to ensure financial stability and maintain affordable rates for all customers.

Current Status of Project: Communications

- Information on the transition of water billing from Alectra to the City is now being communicated to the public through bill message, inserts and website information.
 - [Alectra Webpage](#)
 - [City of Guelph Webpage](#)
- Staff have developed a communications plan to ensure customers are aware of the upcoming changes to their water billing.
- This report and presentation are being brought forward to Council to provide context and insight ahead of upcoming actions, offering a preview of what is anticipated in 2026.

Customer Accounts By-law

- The previous Water and Wastewater Customer Accounts By-law (2016) 20074, which designates Alectra as our billing agent, will be repealed, as it will no longer be applicable following the in-house transition.
- A new Customer Accounts by-law is coming to Council for approval in early 2026, to provide the authority for in-house activities and set the framework for utility billing and collections.
- The new by-law will be applicable to all properties that receive water, wastewater, and stormwater services.

Customer Accounts By-law, User Fees

- These fees are charged directly to the requesting account holder that required action and are designed to recover the costs of providing the service. These user fees ensure that the costs of individual service requests are borne by the requesting customer, rather than being distributed across all account holders.
- User Fees are charged for:
 - change of occupancy, when a customer moves into or out of property.
 - request of Utility Certificates showing the balance on water accounts at the time of a property purchase/sale.
 - unpaid water charges transferred to the property tax account.
 - payments that are rejected or returned by financial institutions
 - missed water meter appointments.

Customer Accounts By-law, Legislation

- This by-law incorporates legislation from the Municipal Act, 2001, specifically Sections 391, 398, and 446, to establish billing for services provided to properties. It also states the legislation and authority for collecting arrears through transfers to the property tax account, Section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, and Ontario Regulation 581/06.
- Additionally, consequences for non-compliance of the customer accounts by-law are outlined, including enforcement and fines, and are aligned with by-law (2024)-20910, which regulates the supply of water in the City of Guelph.

Customer Accounts By-law, Framework

- We have identified efficiencies in having only property owners hold the water account. With the transition into in-house billing and collections, staff are proposing that tenant accounts be phased out.
- When there is a change in occupancy or on request, the new account will be set up in the name of the property owner.
- There will be options for a duplicated copy of the bill (subject to an additional fee).
- This will ensure transparency for the property owner who is legally responsible for any water billing arrears.

Stormwater By-law Amendment (2025)-21108

- Following the transition of billing and collection to in-house, the City will continue to impose fees and charges on residents for stormwater services and activities as outlined in the Schedule of by-law (2023-20839). These fees and charges will be billed monthly to property owners, along with water, wastewater, and other charges.
- To ensure clarity and transparency, the amendment confirms that monthly billing is calculated based on a thirty (30) day month.

Questions and Discussion

