

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Environment and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 21, 2024

RE: **RDOS Universal Metering Program**

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT staff proceed with the universal metering plan and tiered billing implementation across all RDOS owned water systems.

THAT the RDOS Board provide a letter to support to accept an invitation to participate in a Universal Metering Pilot Project commencing in early 2025 with .

Purpose:

To provide recommendations for details related to the Universal metering program, updated tiered billing and a schedule of installation across all RDOS Water Systems.

Business Plan Objective:

KSD 2: Optimize the customer experience, Goal 2.2 To meet public needs through the continuous improvement of key services.

KSD 3: Build a sustainable Region, Goal 3.3 To develop an environmentally sustainable region.

Background:

Water Conservation is a common topic across the Okanagan Valley. One of the most effective ways to reduce water consumption is to introduce water meters and rate schedules that link the amount of water used to an incremental fee schedule.

Rationale for Water Metering:

There are a number of reasons to consider water meters on the water systems within the RDOS.

- The most important benefit of the metering program is to establish efficient and effective assessments of infrastructure.

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- Generally, infrastructure associated with the RDOS managed water systems is aging and showing signs of needing upgrades and improvements to maintain level of service and allow for additional connections to service increasing populations across the region.
 - With the effects of climate change and the impacts to the water supply seen in recent years, water conservation programming will aide in reducing excessive use and allow residents to monitor and manage their water use responsibly and make informed decisions regarding their consumption.
 - Address water use concerns before critical shortages become an issue that would affect indoor use.
 - Developing stronger relationships with agricultural producers in the region by participating in discussions to understand the needs and challenges faced by producers.

Drought patterns are cyclical and developing a robust program of sound infrastructure, responsible consumption, practical efforts for landscaping, knowledgeable residents and using reliable technology will allow the region to withstand pressures related to climate change and the variable weather patterns we have experienced in the recent past.

A steady and organized approach is proposed to begin universal metering of the systems using a priority scale based on size, age, consumption and history. The focus is on residential water use, so the reduction of excess outdoor use is crucial for managing water shortages. Agricultural and commercial connections will also be analysed so recommendations can be reviewed for a change in billing structure.

Analysis:

Scheduling

Several factors are being considered for the prioritizing of the systems for the installation of meters. These include

- age of the system
- what is the potential for undetected leaks in older infrastructure
- the number of connections and how many are residential, irrigation or commercial connections,
- what are the consumption patterns of users
- how does the infrastructure perform in peak use periods and is there sufficient capacity.

Each of the criteria looks at components of the water supply infrastructure, but the potential reduction in use and how that reduction can extend the service life of the system is also considered.

A comparison of Municipal and Regional District billing structures and fees has aided in determining the recommendations submitted for consideration.

Financial Implications:

Allocations within Capital Budgets for several systems have amounts dedicated to meter and meter pit installation.

There are several possibilities for funding universal metering. Capital reserves, Community Works Gas Tax or grants can be used to reduce costs to users. Currently, there are no federal-provincial grant funding streams open.

However, a group is currently working on early stages of a potential pilot project that may benefit our program. Staff will bring additional information forward to the Board as it becomes available. At this time, the organizers require a letter accepting an invitation to be included when determining participants for their pilot project.

Communication Strategy:

A communications plan will be developed as part of the final implementation plan for universal metering within each water system. This will include several public outreach activities and publications to support the implementation and community involvement.

Respectfully submitted:

"Shelley Fiorito"

S. Fiorito, Projects Coordinator

Endorsed by:

"Liisa Bloomfield"

L. Bloomfield, Senior Manager