



BYLAW 15-24 – WATER BYLAW

Purpose

The purpose of Bylaw 15-24 is to provide for and regulate a Water Utility within the Town of Okotoks.

Readings

This Bylaw is ready for three readings.

Report, Analysis and Financial Implications

In response to the current drought situation Administration provided a water management update and summary of drought preparedness to the January 15 and March 18, 2024 Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meetings, which included potential changes to water service levels and associated bylaws. As it relates to the Bylaw, the following motions were passed:

January 15, 2024:

"That, prior to March 31, 2024, Water Bylaw 23-21 be amended to incorporate changes to the watering schedule in accordance with Consideration #1 (Option B)* and provided to Council for consideration."

*Option B includes service level changes to outdoor watering by maintaining the two day per week schedule, but reducing watering from 6 to 4 hours and eliminating weekend watering.

March 18, 2024:

"That a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve Draft Water Bylaw 15-24 with amendments as discussed."

An updated draft Water Bylaw 15-24 incorporates GPC's recommended amendments. Schedule B of the Water Bylaw includes a detailed overview of community water conservation requirements for all five water conservation stages. The addition of a fifth stage for essential use only increases the Town's emergency preparedness. The changes to the watering schedule improves operational demands on the water system in alignment with Council's conservation objectives and turf best management practices. Additional water conservation requirements were transferred from the water shortage response plan for increased visibility and enforceability.

A comprehensive legal review of the draft Bylaw resulted in additional changes, substantive revisions include:

- Adding a purpose statement to aid with interpretation;
- Removing items which are dealt with separately under Safety Codes legislation;
- Changing the restriction against using alternate water supplies to a restriction against providing alternate water supplies (for consistency with the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*);

- Changing the clauses respecting discontinuation of services from general discontinuations to temporary suspensions;
- Addressing the manual water meter reading program;
- Clarifying the enforcement mechanisms available to the Town;
- Clarifying the steps to be taken in the event of incorrect billing;
- Addressing water conservation measures;
- Adding specified penalties for enforcement under the *Provincial Offences Procedures Act*; and
- Creating a new philosophy on penalties linked to tier level in the water shortage response plan.

Other Bylaw changes include:

- Revising definitions to align with terms used in the Bylaw;
- Simplifying where possible;
- Clarifying the distinctions between owners, occupants, and customers;
- Aligning wording with the *MGA*; and
- Grouping similar items into the same section of the Bylaw.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responsibly Managed Growth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated Environmental Leadership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Local Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Culture & Community Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Organizational Excellence		

Public Hearing / Participation Strategy

A comprehensive community participation strategy has been prepared to communicate the proposed changes and drought risk to the community as reviewed with the GPC.

Alternatives for Consideration

n/a

CAO Comments

This Bylaw is ready for three readings however, Council has the discretion to proceed with as many readings as desired. While Council has been working on a water bylaw since the January Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting, the draft Bylaw and Water Shortage Response Plan will require a change in practice for both the Town and its residents. The Bylaw and plan attempt to show how the Town needs to use water wisely, and conserve water for its highest and best use, especially in times of drought. This plan allows the Town to be prepared and approving this in March allows Town Administration time to begin an education campaign and work with residents to change their outdoor watering schedules and equipment for the launch of the outdoor watering season. New to the plan are provisions on what the Town will do to help increase transparency in our own operations to the public.

Attachment(s)

1. Draft Bylaw 15-24 The Water Bylaw
2. Draft Bylaw 15-24 The Water Bylaw REDLINED FROM GPC VERSION

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