

Grandview Municipality
Utility Account Collection Policy (Water/Sewer)

Effective Date: April 13, 2016
Resolution Number: 2016-112

Policy Statement:

The Grandview Municipality collects outstanding accounts on all past due utility (water/sewer) bills. Accounts that are not collected may have their utility service disconnected.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline and define the collection, disconnection, and reconnection policy of outstanding water and sewer utility accounts.

Definitions:

1. Account holder/Customer
 - Refers to the person(s) who has requested water and/or sewer service at a particular residence, whether it is the property owner or the renter
2. Property Owner
 - Refers to the person(s) who is listed on the title of a specific property
3. Renter
 - Refers to a person(s) who is the utility holder/customer and who is not the property owner
4. Community or Multiple Residence/Property
 - Refers to properties that house several people. For example, a hospital, care home, group home, apartments
5. Utility
 - Refers to Water and/or Sewer Services in the Grandview Municipality either from the Sugarloaf pipeline or the G3 pipeline

General Overview - Sugarloaf

1. Water meters are read the second last week of March, June, September and December. In March, June and September, residents are asked to read their own meters. In December, employees of the Municipality read the meters

2. Water billings are prepared and mailed out the last week of March, June, September and December.
3. Water billings are due on the last business day of the month following the billing date (April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31).
4. On the first day of each month following the due date, all outstanding accounts are assessed a 1.25% interest fee.

General Overview – G3

1. Water meters are read the first week of each quarter (January, April, July and October)
2. Water billings are prepared and mailed the last week of January, April, July and October.
3. Water billings are due on the last business day of the month following the billing date (February 28, May 31, August 31, and November 30).
4. On the first day of each month following the due date, all outstanding accounts are assessed a 1.25% interest fee.

Collection Procedure – Property Owner Resides on Property

1. All accounts that are assessed interest are sent the *First Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *First Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection, payment arrangements and financial assistance. See attached for a sample of the *First Reminder Notice*.
2. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *First Reminder Notice*, the account holder is sent a *Second and Final Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *Second and Final Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection and payment arrangements. See attached for a sample of the *Second Reminder Notice*.
3. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*, and if other payment arrangements have not been made, the CAO will present the details of the account at the first Council meeting following the deadline indicated in the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*. If approved by resolution, the outstanding utility charges may be added to the property owner's taxes as per the Municipal Act S. 252(2).
4. At the same Council meeting referenced above, Council may review the account to determine if the service will be disconnected. Factors taken into consideration will be the following:

- a. Number of times the account has been in arrears
 - b. Season of the year
 - c. Age of children, if any, living at the residence
 - d. Location of shut-off valve
 - e. Any extenuating circumstances
5. If approved, a *Disconnection Notice* will be sent by registered mail to the account holder providing the date of disconnection; this date shall be at least 14 days from the date of the notice. See attached for a sample of the *Disconnection Notice*. If the outstanding balance is paid prior to the disconnection date, the disconnection will not proceed.

Collection Procedure – Rental Property – Owner pays for water and sewer

1. All accounts that are assessed interest are sent the *First Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *First Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection, payment arrangements and financial assistance. See attached for a sample of the *First Reminder Notice*.
2. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *First Reminder Notice*, the account holder is sent a *Second and Final Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *Second and Final Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection and payment arrangements. See attached for a sample of the *Second Reminder Notice*.
3. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*, and if other payment arrangements have not been made, the CAO will present the details of the account at the first Council meeting following the deadline indicated in the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*. If approved by resolution, the outstanding utility charges may be added to the property owner's taxes as per the Municipal Act S. 252(2).
4. At the same Council meeting referenced above, Council may review the account to determine if the service will be disconnected. Council may not disconnect the water at a rental property when the property owner is responsible for paying the utility bill. Council may decide to disconnect the water at the property owner's own residence and/or other vacant property with the same owner. Factors taken into consideration will be the following:
 - a. Number of times the account has been in arrears
 - b. Season of the year
 - c. Age of children, if any, living at the residence
 - d. Location of shut-off valve
 - e. Any extenuating circumstances

5. If approved, a *Disconnection Notice* will be sent by registered mail to the account holder providing the date of disconnection; this date shall be at least 14 days from the date of the notice. See attached for a sample of the *Disconnection Notice*. If the outstanding balance is paid prior to the disconnection date, the disconnection will not proceed.

Collection Procedure – Rental Property – Tenant pays for water and sewer

1. All accounts that are assessed interest are sent the *First Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *First Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection, payment arrangements and financial assistance. A copy of this notice will also be sent to the property owner. See attached for a sample of the *First Reminder Notice*.
2. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *First Reminder Notice*, the account holder is sent a *Second and Final Reminder Notice* indicating the outstanding balance including interest. The *Second and Final Reminder Notice* will include information on service disconnection and payment arrangements. A copy of this notice will also be sent to the property owner. See attached for a sample of the *Second Reminder Notice*.
3. If the account is not paid within 14 days of the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*, and if other payment arrangements have not been made, the CAO will present the details of the account at the first Council meeting following the deadline indicated in the *Second and Final Reminder Notice*. If approved by resolution, the outstanding utility charges may be added to the property owner's taxes as per the Municipal Act S. 252(2).
4. At the same Council meeting referenced above, Council may review the account to determine if the service will be disconnected. Factors taken into consideration will be the following:
 - a. Number of times the account has been in arrears
 - b. Season of the year
 - c. Age of children, if any, living at the residence
 - d. Location of shut-off valve
 - e. Any extenuating circumstances
5. If approved, a *Disconnection Notice* will be sent by registered mail to the account holder providing the date of disconnection; this date shall be at least 14 days from the date of the notice. A copy of this notice will also be sent to the property owner. See attached for a sample of the *Disconnection Notice*. If the outstanding balance is paid prior to the disconnection date, the disconnection will not proceed.

Reconnection of Service

1. There shall be a \$30.00 (or otherwise ordered by the Public Utilities Board) fee for reconnection of service. This fee must be paid prior to the reconnection of the service.
2. No reconnection of service shall occur unless there is either full payment of the outstanding balance or satisfactory payment arrangements are made.
3. All reasonable efforts shall be made to reconnect or restore the service as soon as possible.

Reporting Requirements

1. The CAO or a designated employee shall keep an accurate record of all accounts, including usage, regular charges, interest charges and reconnection fees.
2. The CAO or a designated employee shall keep an accurate and detailed record of all efforts made to contact the customer for payment (copies of bills, letters, and telephone calls) and the result of such effort.
3. The CAO or a designated employee shall keep an accurate record of those customers who are in arrears and who are disconnected. This record shall also record a history of all such instances.

General Comments

1. This policy does not affect the Municipality's right to disconnect in times of emergency and/or for reasons of safety or for failure to comply with water rationing requirements.
2. The Municipality shall seek the advice of the Public Utilities Board and, where necessary, Child and Family Services, when the life, health or emotional wellbeing of children is endangered by the disconnection of water and sewer from the property.
3. The Grandview Municipality may seek a Public Utilities Board exemption from disconnection procedures when dealing with customers who consistently and deliberately show patterns of avoidance and who clearly understand the consequences of their actions.
4. If a suitable payment arrangement between the account holder and the Municipality is made and subsequently broken, the Municipality may disconnect the service with 7 calendar days' notice.

5. The Grandview Municipality must make a special application to the Public Utilities Board prior to disconnecting service to a community or multiple residence/property.

Disconnection Guidelines

1. The Municipality will consider disconnection of services for account holders who consistently and deliberately show patterns of avoidance and who clearly understand the consequences of their actions.
2. The Municipality will not consider disconnection of services unless there are 2 or more quarterly bills outstanding.
3. If there are children under the age of 18 residing at the location where service is to be disconnected, the Municipality will contact Child and Family Services to inform them of the service disconnection.