

---

**TO:** GENERAL COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** REVENUE BRANCH STAFFING

**WARD:** ALL

**PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACTS:** K. JYLHA, MANAGER OF TAXATION AND REVENUE, EXT. 4530  
C. SMITH, SENIOR MANAGER OF ACCOUNTING AND REVENUE, EXT. 5128

**GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:** C. MILLAR, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND TREASURER

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:** M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

---

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That the Revenue Branch be authorized to hire a new permanent full-time Revenue Billing Technician (water) with a total annual cost of \$90,327.37.

### **PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

2. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an additional full-time employee (FTE) in the Revenue Branch ("Branch") of the Finance Department.
3. The City of Barrie ("City") has over 47,200 water/wastewater ("water") billing accounts, with an average of 121 new accounts added every month since January 2024.
4. The Revenue Billing Technician position is responsible for the accurate and timely billing of all water accounts, following up on billing anomalies, updating operating procedures and account master data changes such as changes in ownership, creating new billing locations, meter change outs, updating accounts with service order information, and closing accounts as necessary, as well as resolving complex customer account issues and collection of accounts in arrears.
5. Water bills are generated in cycles with the City divided into sections called cycle routes. Residential billing is on a 2-month cycle, industrial and commercial bills are issued monthly. Depending on the cycle route, anywhere from 4,500 to 9,000 bills are generated every week. Water billing accounted for over \$73 million in revenue in 2023.
6. There has been only one (1) Revenue Billing Technician (water) since the City brought water billing in-house on October 1, 2011.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Growth**

7. The City of Barrie is experiencing a period of significant growth. The Barrie Growth Report (Appendix "A") indicates the population of the City was 159,521 at the end of 2023 and is expected to continue to rise to 298,000 by 2051.

8. In February 2023, the City pledged to facilitate the construction of 23,000 housing units by 2031. At the end of 2023, the City had 22,298 (Appendix "A") residential units in the development pipeline at various stages of approvals which could result in approximately 2,790 residential units being built and occupied every year over the next 8 years.
9. With new growth there is a corresponding increase in the number of water/wastewater accounts which requires a significantly increased amount of work to maintain service levels and service this increase in accounts. There were 616 new water meters installed for new builds in 2022, 1,032 in 2023 (Appendix "A").
10. In 2024, Revenue staff have processed 727 new meter installs based on new builds and 2,035 water meter changes to date as a result of the water meter replacement program. This number will continue to grow in the coming years.

#### **Water Meter Replacement Program**

11. In addition to the population growth, the ongoing replacement of equipment to measure water consumption results in additional work for the Revenue Billing Technician in the billing system. As stated in Staff Report INF005-24 (Appendix "B"), to achieve the desired result of maintaining all City water meters within their designed life cycle, at least 2,500 water meters must be replaced each year.
12. On June 19, 2024 Council approved Motion 24-G-162 to hire a full-time permanent Water Meter Installer to keep up with the program workload. This brings the total number of Water Meter Installers dedicated to the meter replacement program to four (4).
13. Staff report INF005-24 notes that due to the varying ages of the more than 24,000 water meters that are beyond their lifecycle, an estimated 5% to 30% under registration of water consumption can be expected. Once a new water meter is installed, the prompt and accurate recording of the new equipment tagged to the ratepayer by the Revenue Billing Technician in the billing system will ensure that accurate and timely billings to the customer will occur.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPACT MATTERS**

14. There are no environmental matters related to this recommendation.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

15. The following alternative is available for consideration by General Committee:

##### **Alternative #1**

General Committee could choose not to authorize the new position.

This alternative is not recommended as it would result in significant overtime costs, staff burnout, delayed or reduced customer service, inaccurate billings due to delayed customer account changes, reduced overdue account collection efforts, and a loss of revenue from untimely system updates related to new water meter installations.

---

**FINANCIAL**

16. In 2023, total water/wastewater billings amounted to almost \$73 million based on water meter readings. Water Operations staff estimate the under registering of water usage by meters that need to be replaced amount to a minimum of \$1.86 million annually. Delays in updating the new meter installation in the billing system in a timely manner will result in a delay in the recognition of this revenue.
17. Total cost of one (1) additional Revenue Billing Technician would be \$90,327.37
18. Funding for the requested additional Revenue Billing Technician would come from the water user rates.

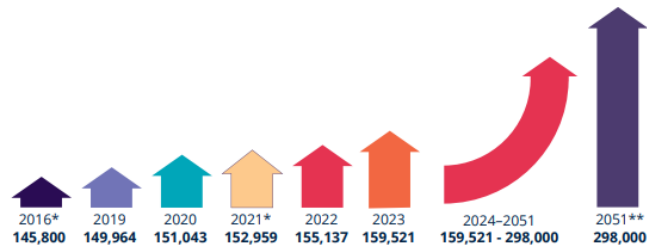
**LINKAGE TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

19. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan:
  - Responsible Governance

## Appendix "A"

### Barrie Growth Report 2023

#### Population Growth



#### **POPULATION FORECASTS BY YEAR**

\*Based on 2016 and 2021 Population Census Data. \*\*Growth Plan Population Projection.

#### Residential Growth

#### **RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE PIPELINE: 22,298**



Draft Approved  
**10,589**



Registered and  
Unbuilt  
**4,052**



Under Application /  
Proposed  
**7,657**

#### New Water Meter Installations due to Growth

Year	Number
2024 (as at June)	727
2023	1,032
2022	616
2021	192
2020	416

## Appendix "B"



STAFF REPORT INF005-24  
JUNE 12, 2024

Page: 1  
File: C11-WAT

---

TO:	GENERAL COMMITTEE
SUBJECT:	WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM
WARDS:	ALL
PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:	D. MOREAU, MANAGER OF WATER OPERATIONS, EXT 6158
SUBMITTED BY:	S. DIEMERT, P. ENG., DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE
GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:	B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P. ENG., PMP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:	M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

---

### RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the Water Operations Branch be authorized to hire a full-time permanent Water Meter Installer with an annual cost of \$85,770.38.

### PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

2. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an additional full-time employee (FTE) in the Water Operations Branch ('Branch').
3. The City of Barrie ('City') has over 47,000 water meters and their associated smart points installed in each residential dwelling and industrial, commercial or institutional (ICI) building for the purpose of fair and accurate billing. These assets have a design life cycle of twenty (20) years for residential water meters and between four (4) and ten (10) years for ICI water meters.
4. The Water Meter Installer position is responsible for maintaining 47,000 water meters, 47,000 smart points, City's capital Water Meter Replacement Program ('Program'), inspection of new water meter installation by developers, high water consumption investigations, turning water on and off as required by other City staff, contractors or homeowners, and other fee for service work as identified in the City's Fees By-law.
5. Over the last five (5) years, the number of new water meters and smart points has also seen significant increases due to growth within the City (see analysis section).
6. There are currently three (3) full-time Water Meter Installers dedicated to this program. The position of Water Meter Installer was created in late 2023, by the conversion of three (3) Water Distribution Operator Class 2 positions. This conversion at the time resulted in annual savings of \$98,574. A fourth position is required to keep up with the Program workload.

### ANALYSIS

7. As water meters reach and surpass their design life cycle, their internal components become laden with minerals causing an increase in friction resulting in the water meter components slowing down and under registering the water passing through it (water usage). As water bills are generated based on the water consumption readings from our water meters this directly results in a loss in revenue.



8. The city currently owns 24,084 water meters that have reached or are beyond their design life cycle.
9. Older Meters that are beyond their design life cycle had fewer functions and lower resolution compared to newer models. New water meters offer the following additional features:
  - Internal data storage - older meters are analog and have no internal data storage. With the newer meters, should there be a loss of communication with the smart point, the water meter will retain 90 days of hourly meter readings that can be recovered and analyzed.
  - Rate of flow function – in addition to a leak indicator, new meters have a rate of flow function. This can assist homeowners to better understand the water consumption within a home when investigating for leaks or sizing to install new equipment.
  - Higher resolution – new water meters can report water consumed in smaller volume increments, making consumption information for our customers more accurate and useful.
10. The increased functionality and resolution can help our customers better understand their water consumption and further promote water conservation, as well as provide accurate consumption volumes for water billing purposes.
11. Due to the varying ages of the 24,084 water meters that are beyond their design lifecycle, an estimated 5% to 30% under registration of water consumption can be expected.
12. To achieve the desired result of maintaining all City water meters within their design life cycle, at least 2,500 water meters must be replaced each year.
14. Water meter asset increases:

Calendar Year	Increase in City owned meter assets
2020	427
2021	221
2022	670
2023	1067
2024	1600 (forecasted)

15. An additional Water Meter Installer position is required to expedite the capital Water Meter Replacement Program, support future growth and maintain current levels of service to our customers. Hiring a water meter installer as soon as possible would reduce the amount of lost revenues due to ageing meters.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT MATTERS**

17. Accurate water metering promotes conservation, encourages the responsible use of water, assists with identifying leaks and sustains the City's water resources.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

18. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:



**Alternative #1**

General Committee could choose not to authorize the funding for the new position.

This alternative is not recommended as it would result in loss of revenue as more meters reach and surpass their design life cycle.

**Alternative #2**

General Committee could choose to direct staff to use third party contractors to complete the water meter replacements.

This alternative is not recommended as it would result in increased costs for meter replacements. Additionally, the use of city staff enables responsive and consistent customer service.

**FINANCIAL**

19. In 2023, total water and wastewater billings amounted to \$72,788,989 based on water meter readings. Assuming 51% of our meters are under registering (estimated at 5-30% of usage) lost revenues would amount to a minimum of \$1.86 million annually.
20. Total cost of one (1) additional Water Meter Installer would be \$85,770.38.
21. Funding for the requested additional Water Meter Installer position would come from the water user rates.
22. It is noted that the Council approved Capital Water Meter Replacement Program is also funded from water user rates.

**LINKAGE TO 2022–2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**

23. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan:
  - ☒ Infrastructure Investments – Update and improve infrastructure
  - ☒ Responsible Governance – Financial stewardship which includes finding efficiencies and innovation.