

**DATE:** May 7, 2021

**FILE:** 5600-01/CVWS

**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Electoral Areas Services Committee

**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

*R. Dyson*

**RE: Summary of Rationale for Multifamily Water Rates**

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### **Purpose**

To present the rationale and considerations made in development and implementation of the current Comox Valley Water System (CVWS) Water Local Service Area (WLSA) multifamily rates.

### **Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

For information purposes only.

### **Executive Summary**

The current tiered rate structure for the CVWS WLSA was developed following a 19 month mock billing process in 2012 and 2013 following the installation of meters for the service. After a review of the mock billing period, metered water rates and the volumetric tiers were developed by Econics and implemented based on the findings. This includes a per-unit allowance for multifamily, where in for each dwelling unit on the property the multifamily base rate is applied.

In May 2021, a request from a local resident was made for consideration to not charge residential properties with more than one dwelling unit the multifamily base rate for each dwelling unit but instead being charged for water consumed at the tiered rates. A number of key considerations in regard to this request are provided below:

- Water infrastructure is sized to handle the peak flows the system experiences. Separate residences on the same property have the potential to significantly impact the water system at peak times based on their water use patterns.
- The multifamily base rate is marginally less at \$24.60 than the residential base rate at \$27.58 with the tiered rates, therefore a home with a secondary suite is paying two slightly lower monthly flat rates.
- The current rate structure provides a volumetric allowance on a per unit basis instead of an allowance for the entire connection, allowing for a fairer billing scheme for many multifamily properties, especially properties with more than two units.
- Similar rate structures are in place for local municipalities, including the Town of Comox and City of Courtenay.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

Concurrence:

***K. La Rose***

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**Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)**

Diane Sampson	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – Sampson Letter to Water Committee, May 5, 2021

5 May, 2021

Comox Valley Regional District  
770 Harmston Avenue  
Courtenay, B.C.  
V9N 0G8

**Attention: Comox Valley Water Committee**

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I would like to begin by saying that I always believe in paying my fair share for the benefit of everyone. However, in the case of my water bill, I feel that I am paying a great deal more than my fair share.

I live on a single property where I have a house with a small cottage at the back, which I rent to supplement my pension. I am not a strata, but I am paying double the amount of a property with one house.

In the over two years I have been here, the total water consumption has never exceeded the water consumption of one household. In my most current bill, the total water consumption was only 34.19 M3. I continually try to save water, despite the amount I could use, because it is what everyone should do. It is not there to waste.

Up until this bill, I always paid the double amount; but this time, seeing that I used only about one third of the allowable amount for a single home, I paid the amount for one household and am writing you this letter.

I would ask the Water Committee and the Board to reconsider its billing policy for non-strata properties and charge what should be charged to reflect what water is consumed, but continuing to have a base rate, with tiered amounts for higher consumption.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

With respect,

Diane Sampson  
4170 Marsden Road  
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 9N5

Copies to:

Daniel Arbour (Area A), Arzeena Hamir (Area B), Edwin Grieve (Area C), Will Cole-Hamilton (Courtenay), Melanie McCollum (Courtenay), Doug Hillian (Courtenay), Wendy Morin (Courtenay), Ken Grant (Comox), Maureen Swift (Comox)