

M A N I T O B A ) Order No. 25/15  
 )  
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD ACT ) February 24, 2015

BEFORE: Susan Proven, P.H.Ec., Acting Chair  
The Hon. Anita Neville, P.C., B.A. (Hons.), Member

CITY OF SELKIRK  
WATER AND SEWER UTILITY  
FINAL WATER and SEWER RATES  
2014, 2015 and 2016

**Summary**

By this Order the Public Utilities Board (Board) hereby confirms as final water and sewer rates for 2014, 2015 and 2016 for the City of Selkirk (City) Water and Sewer Utility (Utility), previously established on an interim *ex parte* basis on October 21, 2013 by Board Order No. 130/13.

The rates were approved effective January 1, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The approved rates are shown below.

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Increase/ Decrease</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Increase/ Decrease</b>
Quarterly Service Charge	\$24.77	\$23.04	-6.98%	\$21.31	-7.51%
Water \$/cubic meter	\$1.80	\$1.80	0.00%	\$1.80	0.00%
Sewer \$/cubic meter	\$1.07	\$1.36	27.10%	\$1.66	22.06%
Minimum Quarterly-Water and Sewer*	\$64.95	\$67.28	3.59%	\$69.75	3.67%
Minimum Quarterly-Water Only*	\$49.97	\$48.24	-3.46%	\$46.51	-3.59%
Minimum Quarterly-Sewer Only*	\$39.75	\$42.08	5.86%	\$44.55	5.87%
Bulk Water\$/cubic meter**	\$2.60	\$2.60	0.00%	\$2.60	0.00%
Reconnection Fee	\$25.00	\$25.00	0.00%	\$25.00	0.00%
Hydrant Rental (Annual)	\$110.00	\$110.00	0.00%	\$110.00	0.00%
*Based on 14m <sup>3</sup>					
**Minimum charge for any quantity will be \$20.00					

Details of other rates may be found in the attached Schedule "A".

## **Background**

The water treatment plant for the City treats on average 4.5 million litres of domestic water per day. The water plant treats ground water from four different well locations. Treatment of the raw water consists of adding chemicals and missing, called coagulation/flocculation, which brings particles in the water together. These particles become heavy and settle out of the water, and are called sedimentation. The addition of synthetic polymers (coagulant aids) and lime for softening are also added to this process. Lime addition raises the water's pH and causes calcium and magnesium (hard water contributors) to precipitate out of the water. This process occurs in a large tank called a clarifier. Water flows from the clarifier to the recarbonation basin, where it is stabilized using carbon dioxide gas. This process adjusts the pH and prevents corrosion or scaling in the distribution system. After recarbonation, the water flows through three rapid sand filters. This process polishes the water, removing any particles that may have carried over from the clarifier. After filtration, chlorine is added for disinfection purposes. A minimum chlorine level of 0.5 mg/l is maintained in the water leaving the water plant, this kills any harmful pathogenic organisms that may enter the system. Once the drinking water has left the plant it is store in two reservoirs and a water tower totaling 10.6 million litres.

The water distribution system is comprised of many components. The City has 53.6 kilometres of watermains, the watermains are isolated by 396 gate valves, the watermains deliver water to 2,935 curb stops and 3,150 water meters.

Fire protection covers the City with 443 hydrants.

The waste water treatment facility is comprised of two parallel activated sludge systems in a single building with integrated screening and grit removal. Each activated sludge system includes a fully mixed aeration tank with two associated clarifier sections. The waste activated sludge from the process is pumped to sludge stabilization lagoons. The supernatant is returned from the lagoons and discharged upstream of the grit system, where it is treated with the plant flow. Ultraviolet disinfection was added in 2006 to replace chlorine disinfection. The activated sludge system is comprised of two aeration tanks and four clarifiers. Currently the waste water treatment facility operates only one train, as it can accommodate the incoming flows while maintenance to the "standby" train is undertaken. Raw wastewater is pumped to the facility via the Dufferin lift station through a 600mm forcemain. The capacity of the existing waste water treatment facility has been established at 34.1 ML/day.

The waste water collection system consists of 47.9 kilometres of sanitary sewer lines, and having 620 sanitary sewer manholes. Branching from the sanitary sewer lines are 2,935 sanitary sewer services. The sanitary sewer lines deliver sewage effluent to six sanitary lift stations in the City.

The City advises that they are required to undergo a nutrient removal project, the scope of which has been set by the Province of Manitoba. The City is required to remove Nitrogen as well as Phosphorous from effluent.

This project is estimated to cost \$19,350,000, with approximately 2/3 or \$12,900,000 in Infrastructure funding grants.

The five year capital plan submitted to the Board April 30, 2014 shows that the City has proposed that the balance of this project will be funded by \$550,000 in reserves and \$6,400,000 in debenture sales. The City plans to use \$3,738,474 in reserves to fund Utility capital projects between 2014 to 2018.

### **Application**

The City of Selkirk (City) applied in August of 2013 for revised water and sewer rates for the Utility. The application was accompanied by a rate study prepared by the City's consultant and By-law No. 5252, read for the first time on July 29, 2013.

On October 17, 2013, the City filed a request that the Board consider approving utility rates on an interim *ex parte* basis to avoid the Utility incurring a deficit. The Board approved interim rates on October 21, 2013 by Board Order No. 130/13.

This interim approval was subject to variation upon completion of a more detailed review. The process included a requirement that a Notice of the approved increase be provided to ratepayers. This was published in the Selkirk Journal on November 14, 2013 and was also inserted with the January 2014 utility bills. No responses were received.

### **Working capital surplus**

Board Order No. 93/09 established that utilities should maintain a minimum working capital surplus, in an amount equal to 20% of annual expenses. The working capital surplus is defined as the Utility fund balance, excluding any capital related items plus Utility reserves.

The 2012 audited financial statements were submitted to the Board on November 20, 2013. These statements showed the City had a working capital surplus of approximately \$3.8 million at the end of 2012. In response to the Board's queries, the City advised that they had asked their auditor to review the Utility schedules and found that the debt issuance related to storm sewer debt and the sewer and water debt interest had been recorded incorrectly. The City submitted revised Schedules 8 and 9 for the audited statements on April 14, 2014.

The working capital surplus (deficit) at December 31 is shown below:

	2012	2011
Fund Surplus/Deficit	\$21,354,558	\$20,550,751
Deduct TCA	\$25,794,508	\$24,903,620
Add Long-Term Debt	\$ 1,158,948	\$ 1,362,538
Add Utility Reserves	\$ 3,100,048	\$ 3,359,214
<b>Equals Working Capital Surplus</b>	<b>\$ (180,954)</b>	<b>\$ 368,883</b>

**Budgeted expenditures**

The rates were determined based on the following budgeted expenditures.

	2014	2015	2016
<b>General</b>			
Administration	248,179	253,143	258,205
Billing and collection	46,370	47,297	48,243
Penalties	24,757	25,253	25,758
<b>Net revenue general</b>	<b>269,792</b>	<b>275,187</b>	<b>280,690</b>
<b>Water</b>			
Purification and treatment	610,803	623,019	635,479
Transmission and Distribution	448,002	456,962	466,101
Non-office salary costs from Administration	213,815	218,091	222,453
Service of Supply	120,283	122,689	125,142
Amortization/ depreciation	464,712	533,225	533,225
Interest on long term debt	171,024	160,941	150,336
Reserves	250000	175000	475000
<b>Sub-total- water expenses</b>	<b>2,278,639</b>	<b>2,289,927</b>	<b>2,607,737</b>
Bulk water fees	4,820	4,820	4,820
Hydrant Rentals	48,730	48,730	48,730
Taxation revenue	375468	375468	375468
Capital grant amortization	200153	230503	230503
<b>Total non-rate revenue - water</b>	<b>629,171</b>	<b>659,521</b>	<b>659,521</b>
<b>Net rate revenue - water</b>	<b>1,649,468</b>	<b>1,630,406</b>	<b>1,948,216</b>
<b>Sewer</b>			
Sewage Treatment and Disposal	499,007	508,987	519,167
Lift Station Costs	84,829	86,526	88,256
Non-office salary costs from Administration	213,815	218,092	222,454
Amortization/ depreciation	498,313	494,808	589,677
Interest on long term debt	22,754	18,439	13,903
Reserves - Utility	250,000	175,000	475,000
Reserves - Nutrient removal project	95,000	95,000	0
<b>Total sewer expenses</b>	<b>1,663,718</b>	<b>1,596,852</b>	<b>1,908,457</b>
Receiving Station-sewage tipping fees	30,000	30,000	30,000
Taxation revenue	107,766	107,766	107,766
Capital grant amortization	75,060	75,060	137,393
<b>Total non-rate revenue- sewer</b>	<b>212,826</b>	<b>212,826</b>	<b>275,159</b>
<b>Net rate revenue - sewer</b>	<b>1,450,892</b>	<b>1,384,026</b>	<b>1,633,298</b>

**Cost allocation methodology**

The Board requires all municipalities to review the costs shared between the general operations of the Municipality and the Utility, and to allocate appropriate and reasonable costs to the Utility, based on a policy known as a Cost Allocation Methodology. The City's current Cost Allocation Methodology was approved in Order No. 8/12. The following revised cost allocation methodology was submitted for approval with the new rate application.

Manager of water/wastewater	100%	
Director of Finance	15%	
Manager of Finance	25%	
Common office space - annual charge	\$7,100	
Billing services - meter reading to receipting and collection	Actual operations staff time. One Utility clerk charged to Utility.	
Accounting/auditing/including by-law making and enforcement	25% of audit costs. Actual legal costs as incurred.	
Office overheads (telephone, photocopier, computer, etc)	Actual costs for PP&S and telephone	
<b>Operating, construction and maintenance costs</b>		
Vehicle - fuel, maintenance, lease costs, capital costs	1/2 ton trucks and cube van used by Utility charged on an hourly basis	
	4 1/2 trucks and a cube van are charged to Utility	
	Costs for insurance, fuel, repair and maintenance are charged to Utility	
Labour - full time, part time, on call, sick time, vacation (including salaries and benefits)	Based on time sheets - time worked is charged to the Utility	
Road repairs and alike (if a project benefits both the Utility and general operations, the cost may be shared)	Based on actual costs	
<b>Major projects</b>		
Interest/financing	Debenture Debt and reserves	
Labour	Based on actual costs	
External costs	Direct charge (dedicated consulting)	

## **Board Findings**

By this Order the Public Utilities Board (Board) hereby confirms as final water rates for the City of Selkirk Water and Sewer Utility (Utility), previously established on an interim *ex parte* basis on October 21, 2013 by Board Order No. 130/13.

The City holds in reserve amounts which could be considered excessive, and has included further reserves in the revenue requirements approved by this Order. Board guidelines state, "...the building of reserves is encouraged in situations where capital improvement or significant repair requirements are foreseen."

The original submission contained two different five year capital expenditure plans; the Municipal form did not include any plans to fund through reserves, and was not signed, as required. In response to questioning, the City submitted a revised copy of the capital expenditure plan that was adopted by Resolution of Council on April 24, 2014. This revised document showed that the City would fund approximately \$3.7 million of its planned capital expenditures through reserves. Based on this revised capital expenditure plan, the Board will approve the revenue requirements submitted by the City.

The Board will approve the revised Cost Allocation Methodology, and reminds the City that this methodology must be used consistently in the future, and requires Board approval should any further changes be considered.

During the review process, the Board requested further information and commends the City for its thoroughness in their responses.

Many of the questions were a result of the City's rate application departing from Board recommended methodologies. When appropriate, applicants are able to propose a variation to standard methodology; however, where such variation is proposed, it must be clearly substantiated in the application and must be suitable to the applicant's situation.

Board decisions may be appealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 58 of *The Public Utilities Board Act*, or reviewed in accordance with Section 36 of the Board's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

1. The interim rates for the City of Selkirk, as set out in Schedule "A" to this Order, approved for 2014, 2015 and 2016 in Order No. 130/13, BE AND ARE HERBY CONFIRMED AS FINAL.
2. The City of Selkirk provide the Board with audited financial statements for 2013 as soon as they are finalized.
3. The City of Selkirk review its water and sewer rates for adequacy and file a report with the Public Utilities Board, as well as an application for revised rates if required, by no later than June 30, 2017.
4. The Cost Allocation Methodology proposed by the City of Selkirk BE AND IS HEREBY APPROVED.

Fees payable upon this Order - \$500.00

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

"SUSAN PROVEN, P.H.Ec."  
Acting Chair

"JENNIFER DUBOIS, CMA"  
Acting Secretary

Certified a true copy of  
Order No. 25/15 issued by  
The Public Utilities Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Acting Secretary

**SCHEDULE "A"**  
**TO BOARD ORDER NO. 25/15**  
**City of Selkirk**  
**Water and Sewer Rates**  
**By-law No. 5252**

**SCHEDULE OF QUARTERLY RATES**

**January 1, 2014**

1. Rates per Cubic Meter

2.

Cubic Meter per quarter

Water	Sewer	Total Water & Sewer
\$1.80	\$1.07	\$2.87

3. Minimum Charges per Quarter

Notwithstanding the rates set forth in paragraph 1, all customers will pay the applicable minimum charges set out below, which includes the water allowance as listed.

**a. Water & Sewer Customers**

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Customer</u>		<u>Water</u>	<u>Sewer</u>	<u>Water &amp; Sewer</u>	<u>Water Only</u>	<u>Sewer Only</u>
	<u>Water Included</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Total Quarterly</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>
	<u>Cubic Meters</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
5/8 inch	14	\$24.77	\$25.20	\$14.98	\$64.95	\$49.97	\$39.75
3/4 inch	28	\$24.77	\$50.40	\$29.96	\$105.13	\$75.17	\$54.73
1 inch	56	\$24.77	\$100.80	\$59.92	\$185.49	\$125.57	\$84.69
1 ½ inch	140	\$24.77	\$252.00	\$149.80	\$426.57	\$276.77	\$174.57
2 inch	350	\$24.77	\$630.00	\$374.50	\$1,029.27	\$654.77	\$399.27
3 inch	630	\$24.77	\$1,134.00	\$674.10	\$1,832.87	\$1,158.77	\$698.87
4 inch	1,260	\$24.77	\$2,268.00	\$1,348.20	\$3,640.97	\$2,292.77	\$1,372.97
6 inch	2,380	\$24.77	\$4,284.00	\$2,546.60	\$6,855.37	\$4,308.77	\$2,571.37

**b. Metered Water Only Customers**

Quarterly minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown in table above.

**c. Sewer Only Customers**

The water from the customers private service shall be metered at the customer's cost. The charge will be based upon consumption as shown above with the water charge excluded.

**SCHEDULE OF QUARTERLY RATES**

**January 1, 2015**

**1. Rates per Cubic Meter**

**Cubic Meter per quarter**

Water	Sewer	Total Water & Sewer
\$1.80	\$1.36	\$3.16

**2. Minimum Charges per Quarter**

Notwithstanding the rates set forth in paragraph 1, all customers will pay the applicable minimum charges set out below, which includes the water allowance as listed.

**a. Water & Sewer Customers**

	Customer	Water	Sewer	Water & Sewer	Water Only	Sewer Only	
	Water Included	Service	Commodity	Commodity	Total Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly
<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Cubic Meter</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
5/8 inch	14	\$23.04	\$25.20	\$19.04	\$67.28	\$48.24	\$42.08
3/4 inch	28	\$23.04	\$50.40	\$38.08	\$111.52	\$73.44	\$61.12
1 inch	56	\$23.04	\$100.80	\$76.16	\$200.00	\$123.84	\$99.20
1 ½ inch	140	\$23.04	\$252.00	\$190.40	\$465.44	\$275.04	\$213.44
2 inch	350	\$23.04	\$630.00	\$476.00	\$1,129.04	\$653.04	\$499.04
3 inch	630	\$23.04	\$1,134.00	\$856.80	\$2,013.84	\$1,157.04	\$879.84
4 inch	1,260	\$23.04	\$2,268.00	\$1,713.60	\$4,004.64	\$2,291.04	\$1,736.64
6 inch	2,380	\$23.04	\$4,284.00	\$3,236.80	\$7,543.84	\$4,307.04	\$3,259.84

**b. Metered Water Only Customers**

Quarterly minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown in table above.

**c. Sewer Only Customers**

The water from the customers private service shall be metered at the customer's cost. The charge will be based upon consumption as shown above with the water charge excluded.

**SCHEDULE OF QUARTERLY RATES**

**January 1, 2016**

1. **Rates per Cubic Meter**

**Cubic Meter per quarter**

Water	Sewer	Total Water & Sewer
\$1.80	\$1.66	\$3.46

2. **Minimum Charges per Quarter**

Notwithstanding the rates set forth in paragraph 1, all customers will pay the applicable minimum charges set out below, which includes the water allowance as listed.

**a. Water & Sewer Customers**

	Customer	Water	Sewer	Water & Sewer	Water Only	Sewer Only	
	Water Included	Service	Commodity	Commodity	Total Quarterly	Quarterly	Quarterly
<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Cubic Meters</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
5/8 inch	14	\$21.31	\$25.20	\$23.24	\$69.75	\$46.51	\$44.55
3/4 inch	28	\$21.31	\$50.40	\$46.48	\$118.19	\$71.71	\$67.79
1 inch	56	\$21.31	\$100.80	\$92.96	\$215.07	\$122.11	\$114.27
1 ½ inch	140	\$21.31	\$252.00	\$232.40	\$505.71	\$273.31	\$253.71
2 inch	350	\$21.31	\$630.00	\$581.00	\$1,232.31	\$651.31	\$602.31
3 inch	630	\$21.31	\$1,134.00	\$1,045.80	\$2,201.11	\$1,155.31	\$1,067.11
4 inch	1,260	\$21.31	\$2,268.00	\$2,091.60	\$4,380.91	\$2,289.31	\$2,112.91
6 inch	2,380	\$21.31	\$4,284.00	\$3,950.80	\$8,256.11	\$4,305.31	\$3,972.11

**b. Metered Water Only Customers**

Quarterly minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown in table above.

**c. Sewer Only Customers**

The water from the customers private service shall be metered at the customer's cost. The charge will be based upon consumption as shown above with the water charge excluded.

**Clauses 3 to 18 are Effective January 1, 2014**

3. **Bulk Water sales**

All water sold in bulk by the City of Selkirk shall be charged for at the rate of \$2.60 per cubic meter. For any quantity the minimum charge will be \$20.00.

4. Sewage Receiving Rates

The City shall charge the following rates to the users for the sewage receiving station:

Administration fee:	\$21.31 per quarterly billing
Volume dumping:	\$8.02 per Cubic Meter
B.O.D. Surcharge:	\$0.51 per kilogram
S.S. Surcharge:	\$0.25 per kilogram
Untested Dumping:	\$13.84 per Cubic Meter

5. Billings and Penalties

Accounts shall be billed quarterly based on water used. A late payment penalty charge of 1 ¼% monthly shall be charged on the dollar amount owing after the billing due date. The due date will be up to thirty (30) days after the mailing of the bills.

6. Outstanding Bills

Pursuant to Section 252(2) of the Municipal Act, the amount of all outstanding charges for water and sewer services, including fines and penalties, are a lien and charge upon the land serviced, and shall be collected in the same manner in which ordinary taxes upon the land are collectible, and with like remedies. Where charges and penalties pursuant to this by-law are not paid within sixty (60) days from the date when they were incurred, the Director of Finance may add said charges and penalties to the taxes on the property and collect them in the same manner as other taxes.

7. New Connections

The City of Selkirk shall charge the amount of twenty-five (\$25) dollars to connect a new service.

8. Disconnections

The Public Utilities Board has approved the Conditions Precedent to be followed by the City with respect to the disconnection of service for non-payment including such matters as notice and the right to appeal such action to the Public Utilities Board. A copy of the Conditions Precedent are available for inspection at the City office.

9. Reconnection

Any service disconnected due to non-payment of account shall not be reconnected until all arrears, penalties and a reconnection fee of \$25.00 have been paid.

10. Meter Testing

Any customer wishing to have a meter tested for accuracy will pay in advance a fee of \$50, plus any applicable meter testing costs. In the event the meter tests prove that the meter is recording water flows more than 3% in excess of actual flows, the meter testing fee and associated costs will be refunded to the customer and the customer's account will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

11. Meter Tampering

Where there is evidence of meter tampering a minimum charge of \$500 will be applied to the customer's account in addition to an amount calculated to adjust for the tampering based on historical usage.

12. Hydrant Rentals

The City will pay to the Utility an annual rental of \$110.00 for each hydrant connected to the system which includes the cost of water.

13. Water Allowance due to Line Freezing

That in any case where at the request of the Director of Operations or his delegate, a customer allows water to run continuously for any period of time to prevent the water lines in the water system from freezing, the charge to that customer for the current quarter shall be the average of the billings for the last three previous quarters to the same customer, or the same premises if the occupant has changed.

14. Service to Customers outside City of Selkirk. limits

The City of Selkirk may sign agreements with customers for the provision of water and sewer services to properties located outside the legal boundaries of the City. Such agreements shall provide for payment of the appropriate rates set out in the schedule, as well as a surcharge, set by resolution of Council which shall be equivalent to the frontage levy, general taxes and special taxes for utility purposes in effect at the time, or may be in effect from time to time, and which would be levied on the property concerned if it were within these boundaries. In addition, all costs of connection to the Utility's mains and installing and maintaining service connections will be paid by the customer.

15. Shared Services between Municipalities

The City of Selkirk may sign agreements with municipalities for provision of sewer and water services to other municipalities. Such agreements shall provide for payment of the appropriate rates set out in the schedule as well as a surcharge set by resolution of Council which shall be equivalent to the frontage levy, general taxes, and special taxes for utility purposes in effect at the time or may be in effect from time to time and which would be levied on the property concerned if it were within these boundaries. In addition, all project costs of a municipality connecting to the City of Selkirk's Water Utility or Sewer Utility shall be paid by that municipality. These costs shall include, but not be limited to, the cost of connection to the City of Selkirk's plants, utility mains, as well as installing and maintaining service connections.

16. Sewage Surcharges

- (a) There may be levied annually, in addition to rates set forth above, a special surcharge on sewage having a Biochemical Oxygen Demand in excess of 300 parts per million, to be set by resolution of Council.
- (b) A special surcharge for substances requiring special treatment shall be charged based on the actual costs of treatment required for the particular sewage or industrial wastes.

17. Cross Connections

No customer or person shall connect, cause to be connected or allow to remain connected any piping, fixture, fitting, container or appliance in a manner which under any circumstances may allow water, wastewater or any harmful liquid or substance to enter the City's water system.

If a condition is found to exist which, in the opinion of the City, is contrary to the aforesaid, the City may either:

- Shut off the service or services; or
- Give notice to the customer to correct the fault at his or her own expense within a specified time period. If the customer fails to comply with such notice the City shall proceed in accordance with clause 6 of this by-law.

18. Authorization for Officer to Enter Upon Premises

The Public Works Manager, or other employee authorized by the City in the absence of the Public Works Manager, shall be authorized to enter upon any premise for the purpose of:

- affixing to any pipe, wire or apparatus connected with any such utility, a meter or any other measuring or testing device; or
- taking readings from, repairing, inspecting or removing any meter or apparatus belonging to the City.