

Order No. 94/19

**MUNICIPALITY OF LORNE
NOTRE DAME DE LOURDES WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITY
FINAL WATER AND WASTEWATER RATES**

July 5, 2019

**BEFORE: Carol Hainsworth, C.B.A., Panel Chair
Shawn McCutcheon, Panel Member**

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1.0 Executive Summary

By this Order, the Manitoba Public Utilities Board (Board) approves as final the water and wastewater rates as applied for by the Municipality of Lorne (Municipality), Notre Dame de Lourdes Water and Wastewater Utility (Utility). These rates were previously established on an interim *ex parte* basis by Board Order No. 63/19.

The approved rates are as follows:

	July 1, 2019	January 1, 2020	January 1, 2021	January 1, 2022
Water (per 1,000 gallons)	\$ 11.67	\$ 12.77	\$ 13.87	\$ 14.98
Wastewater (per 1,000 gallons)	\$ 1.43	\$ 1.33	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.14
Quarterly Service Charge	\$ 7.96	\$ 8.36	\$ 8.76	\$ 9.16
Minimum Quarterly Charge - Water and Wastewater*	\$ 47.26	\$ 50.66	\$ 54.06	\$ 57.52
Wastewater Only Customers**	\$ 20.83	\$ 20.33	\$ 19.83	\$ 19.42
Rate Rider (per 1,000 gallons of water)***	\$ 5.05	\$ 5.05	\$ 5.05	\$ 5.05
*Based on 3,000 gallons				
**Based on 9,000 gallons				
***Effective for 5 years beginning July 1, 2019 or until revenue has reached \$348,895				

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

Rationale for the Board's decisions may be found under Board Findings below.

2.0 Background

The Municipality operates a water and wastewater utility consisting of a water treatment plant (owned by the Manitoba Water Services Board), water distribution system, a two-cell lagoon, and a wastewater collection system. The Utility serves 293 customers (as at October 2018) consisting of 273 metered water and wastewater customers, 18 metered water only customers, and 2 wastewater only customers. The Utility does not service any customers outside the Notre Dame de Lourdes area.

Rates were last set in March 2011 in Board Order No. 47/11 prior to the interim *ex parte* rates set in Board Order No. 63/19 in May 2019. Board Order No. 63/19 also approved an eleven-year actual and budgeted operating deficit of \$458,817 to be recovered through a combination of existing surplus account funding of \$109,922 and a rate rider of \$5.05 per 1,000 gallons beginning July 1, 2019 for a period for five years or until revenue from the rate rider has reached \$348,895.

Water Supply/Distribution

The water plant and lines were constructed in 1965. The water is sourced from two production wells located near the water plant. Since 2016, 260 meters of water main has been installed, distribution pumps, the fire pump, and monitor have been replaced, variable frequency drives (VFDs) have been installed on the distribution and fire pumps, and a genset has been connected for back-up power supply.

Wastewater Collection/Treatment

Wastewater is collected with a gravity wastewater system, which uses three lift stations. The lagoon is a two-cell earthen structure constructed in 1987 with wastewater lines installed in 1989.

Unaccounted for Water

Unaccounted for water is 16% as at December 31, 2017, which exceeds the Board Guidelines' acceptable percentage of 10%. The RM has not provided any plan to address the levels of unaccounted for water.

3.0 Application

On November 22, 2018, the Board received an application for revised rates from the Municipality for the Utility. The application was accompanied by a rate study completed by the Municipality's consultant and By-Law #0032/18, having been read for the first time on November 13, 2018.

The Municipality states the revised rates are primarily required to provide for the ongoing annual operating deficits resulting from insufficient rates, to provide contingency funding for the utility, and to provide for increased utility staffing time requirements.

A Public Notice of Application was issued on December 10, 2018 allowing for any questions or comments with respect to the proposed rate increases to the Board and/or the Municipality on or before January 11, 2019. No expressions of concern were received.

When reviewing an application, the Board has at its disposal two approaches, either a paper or public hearing review. After the publication of the Notice of Application, the Board considers the application and stakeholder responses, and determines which method of review is most appropriate. Whenever reasonable, the Board reviews the application using a paper review process, which saves the cost of a public hearing process. Given the Board did not receive any customer responses that was subsequently resolved, the Board has chosen a paper review process for this application.

The rates were calculated based on the following projections using an inflation rate of 2% in all calculations:

Schedule of Utility Rate Requirements – Notre Dame de Lourdes Water and Wastewater 2019 to 2022 Budget Forecasts (\$)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Forecast			
General Expenses				
Administration	8,436	8,604	8,776	8,952
Training Costs	962	982	1,001	1,021
Total General Expenses	9,398	9,586	9,777	9,973
Revenue				
Penalties	1,428	1,457	1,486	1,515
Total General Revenues	1,428	1,457	1,486	1,515
Net Costs - General	7,970	8,129	8,291	8,458
Water Expenses				
Purification and Treatment	48,149	49,112	50,094	51,096
Transmission and Distribution	54,060	55,141	56,244	57,369
Other	7,140	7,283	7,428	7,577
Water Purchases	100,600	100,600	102,612	104,664
Service of Supply	1,020	1,040	1,061	1,082
Amortization	8,255	8,255	8,255	8,255
Total Water Expenses	219,224	221,431	225,694	230,043
Revenue				
Connection Fees	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
Hydrant Rentals (24 hydrants)	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
MB Wtr. Serv. Bd. - Reimbursement	27,489	28,039	28,600	29,172
Total Water Revenue	34,689	35,239	35,800	36,372
Net Costs - Water	184,535	186,192	189,894	193,672
Wastewater Expenses				
Collection System	7,593	7,745	7,899	8,057
Treatment and Disposal	510	520	531	541
Lift Station	7,650	7,803	7,959	8,118
Other Wastewater and Disposal	3,060	3,121	3,184	3,247
Amortization	5,506	5,506	5,388	5,150
Interest on Long-Term Debt	2,324	1,895	1,449	985
Net Costs - Wastewater	26,643	26,590	26,410	26,098
Total Costs	219,148	220,911	224,595	228,228

Working Capital Surplus/Deficit

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.

As per the 2017 audited financial statements, the working capital deficit at December 31, 2017 was:

Fund Surplus	\$209,888
Deduct Tangible Capital Assets	(595,984)
Add Long-Term Debt	68,418
Add Utility Reserves	8,119
Equals Working Capital Surplus	\$(309,559)
Operating Expenses	\$197,002
20% of operating expenses (Target)	\$39,400

The above-noted working capital calculation for the Utility does not meet the Board recommended 20% of operating expenses.

Cost Allocation Methodology

The Board requires all municipal governments to review the costs shared between its general operations and the Utility, and to allocate appropriate and reasonable costs to the Utility, based on a policy known as a Cost Allocation Methodology. This allocation must be submitted to the Board for approval and cannot be changed without receiving approval from the Board. The Board's requirements regarding cost allocation methodologies can be found in Board Order No. 93/09.

The Municipality's proposed Cost Allocation Methodology is as follows:

Municipality of Lorne – Notre Dame de Lourdes Water and Wastewater Utility Allocation Plan for Non-Direct Shared Services as at October, 2018			
Category	Sub-category	Options	
1.0 Administrative Staff		Activity Based (see Note1)	1.5% of General legislative expenses excluding assessment and grant expenses
	1.1 Billing services – meter reading to receipting and collection.		Meter reading – Part of Utility staff expense; receipting and collection are part of the admin. staff allocation
	1.2 Accounting/ auditing/ including By-Law making and enforcement.		1.5% of audit costs
	1.3 Common office space		1.5% of office costs, utilities
	1.4 Office overheads (telephone, photocopier, computer, etc.)		1.5% of printing, postage, and stationary
2.0 Operating, Construction, and Maintenance Costs			
	2.1 Vehicle – fuel, maintenance, lease costs, capital costs		There is currently no charge to the Utility for vehicle costs.
	2.2 Labour – full time, part time, on call, sick time, vacation (see Note 2)		75% of one Utility operator time is charged to the Utility
	2.3 Public works building and property.	The Utility operator works at the water plant	
	2.4 Road repairs and alike (see Note 3)	Based on actual costs	
3.0 Major projects			
	Interest/Financing		N/A
	Labour	Based on actual costs.	
	External costs	Direct charge (dedicated consulting)	

Note 1 – Allocation must be updated periodically to reflect impacts of inflation.

Note 2 – Including salaries and benefits.

Note 3 – If a project involves work benefitting both the Utility and general operations the costs may be shared (i.e. If reconstructing a road and replacing services at the same time, a portion of the roadwork costs may be allocated to the Utility.).

Contingency Allowance and Utility Reserves

As per the Board's Water and Wastewater Rate Application Guidelines, a yearly allowance equal to 10% of the variable operating costs is recommended for contingency allowance.

There is a Contingency Allowance of 10% of net rate costs, less amortization expenses and interest costs, included in the rate study. This equates to \$18,542 for water and \$1,996 for wastewater (or a total Contingency Allowance of \$20,538).

The Municipality advises there are no capital projects identified in the five-year capital program that require reserve funding. In addition, increased rates coupled with the forecasted Working Capital Surplus amounts expected to meet PUB requirements by 2022, no annual Utility reserve transfer has been requested.

4.0 Board Findings

The Board has reviewed the rate application and the projections presented by the Municipality in its application, and finds them to be reasonable. The Board grants approval for the water and wastewater rates as applied for effective January 1, 2020, January 1, 2021, and January 1, 2022.

The Board grants approval for the revised Cost Allocation Methodology and reminds the Municipality this methodology must be used consistently. Any changes to the new, revised cost allocation methodology require Board approval prior to its enforcement.

The Board notes rates were last set in 2011, which is an unacceptable period of time between Rate Applications. The Board reminds the Municipality the Board Guidelines for the preparation and approval of water and wastewater rates recommend utilities review its rate requirements at least every three years to ensure the Utility's base rate is sufficient to meet operational requirements and protect the financial position of the Utility. It is the Utility's responsibility to regularly review the rates and ensure rates are adequate to recover the cost of service being provided to its customers.

In general, customers are more tolerant of regular, smaller increase than one significant rate increase. The Board reminds the Municipality to be more diligent in conducting regular rate reviews to avoid additional costs to customers through rate riders required to recover for Utility deficits.

The Board requires the Municipality to review its water and wastewater rates for adequacy and file a report with the Board, as well as an application for revised rates if required, on or before December 31, 2022.

The Board is concerned about the Municipality's unaccounted for water levels of 16%, which exceeds the Board Guidelines' acceptable percentage of 10%. The Board recommends the Municipality develop and implement a plan to reduce this figure to meet the Board Guidelines' acceptable percentage of 10% as soon as possible.

5.0 IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The water and wastewater rates for the Municipality of Lorne, Notre Dame de Lourdes Water and Wastewater Utility, as approved on an interim *ex parte* basis in Board Order No. 63/19, BE AND ARE HEREBY CONFIRMED AS FINAL in accordance with the attached Schedule A.
2. The revised Shared Cost Allocation Methodology for the Municipality of Lorne BE AND IS HEREBY APPROVED.
3. The Municipality of Lorne amend its water and wastewater rate By-Law to reflect the decisions in this Order and submit a copy to the Board once it has received third and final reading.
4. The Municipality of Lorne provide a notice to its customers, including the decisions in this Order and submit a copy to the Public Utilities Board.
5. The Municipality of Lorne review its water and wastewater 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 December 31, 2022.

Fees payable upon this Order - \$500.00

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. The Board's Rules may be viewed on the Board's website at www.pubmanitoba.ca.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

"Carol Hainsworth"

Panel Chair

"Frederick Mykytyshyn"

Assistant Associate Secretary

Certified a true copy of Order No. 94/19
issued by The Public Utilities Board



Assistant Associate Secretary

SCHEDULE A
MUNICIPALITY OF LORNE
NOTRE DAME DE LOURDES UTILITY
WATER & WASTEWATER UTILITY RATES BY-LAW #0032/18
SCHEDULE OF QUARTERLY RATES

1. Schedule of Commodity Rates & Quarterly Service Charge

July 1, 2019

Rates per 1,000 Gallons

1,000 Gallons per quarter

	Water	Wastewater	Water & Wastewater
	\$11.67	\$1.43	\$13.10

Quarterly Service Charge \$7.96

2. Minimum Charges per Quarter

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

a) Water & Wastewater Customers

	Water Included (Gallons)	Customer Service Charge	Water Commodity Charge	Wastewater Commodity Charge	Deficit Rate Rider \$5.05/1,000	Water & Wastewater Total Quarterly Minimum
5/8 inch	3,000	\$7.96	\$35.01	\$4.29	\$15.15	\$62.41
¾ inch	6,000	\$7.96	\$70.02	\$8.58	\$30.30	\$116.86
1 inch	12,000	\$7.96	\$140.04	\$17.16	\$60.60	\$225.76
1 ½ inch	30,000	\$7.96	\$350.10	\$42.90	\$151.50	\$552.46
2 inch	75,000	\$7.96	\$875.25	\$107.25	\$378.75	\$1,369.21

b) Water Only Customers

The minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown above but the Wastewater Commodity Charge will be excluded.

c) Wastewater Only for Residential Customers

The wastewater only charge is based on average quarterly consumption of 9,000 gallons plus the quarterly customer service charge.

The quarterly charge for wastewater only customers is $(9 * \$1.43) + \$7.96 = \$20.83$.

1. Schedule of Commodity Rates & Quarterly Service Charge

January 1, 2020

Rates per 1,000 Gallons

1,000 Gallons per quarter

	Water	Wastewater	Water & Wastewater
	\$12.77	\$1.33	\$14.10

Quarterly Service Charge \$8.36

2. Minimum Charges per Quarter

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

a) Water & Wastewater Customers

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Water Included (Gallons)</u>	<u>Customer Service Charge</u>	<u>Water Commodity Charge</u>	<u>Wastewater Commodity Charge</u>	<u>Deficit Rate Rider \$5.05/1,000</u>	<u>Water & Wastewater Total Quarterly Minimum</u>
5/8 inch	3,000	\$8.36	\$38.31	\$3.99	\$15.15	\$65.81
¾ inch	6,000	\$8.36	\$76.62	\$7.98	\$30.30	\$123.26
1 inch	12,000	\$8.36	\$153.24	\$15.96	\$60.60	\$238.16
1 ½ inch	30,000	\$8.36	\$383.10	\$39.90	\$151.50	\$582.86
2 inch	75,000	\$8.36	\$957.75	\$99.75	\$378.75	\$1,444.61

b) Water Only Customers

The minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown above but the Wastewater Commodity Charge will be excluded.

c) Wastewater Only for Residential Customers

The wastewater only charge is based on average quarterly consumption of 9,000 gallons plus the quarterly customer service charge.

The quarterly charge for wastewater only customers is $(9 * \$1.33) + \$8.36 = \$20.33$.

1. Schedule of Commodity Rates & Quarterly Service Charge

January 1, 2021

Rates per 1,000 Gallons

1,000 Gallons per quarter

	Water	Wastewater	Water & Wastewater
	\$13.87	\$1.23	\$15.10

Quarterly Service Charge \$8.76

2. Minimum Charges per Quarter

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

a) Water & Wastewater Customers

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Water Included (Gallons)</u>	<u>Customer Service Charge</u>	<u>Water Commodity Charge</u>	<u>Wastewater Commodity Charge</u>	<u>Deficit Rate Rider \$5.05/1,000</u>	<u>Water & Wastewater Total Quarterly Minimum</u>
5/8 inch	3,000	\$8.76	\$41.61	\$3.69	\$15.15	\$69.21
¾ inch	6,000	\$8.76	\$83.22	\$7.38	\$30.30	\$129.66
1 inch	12,000	\$8.76	\$166.44	\$14.76	\$60.60	\$250.56
1 ½ inch	30,000	\$8.76	\$416.10	\$36.90	\$151.50	\$613.26
2 inch	75,000	\$8.76	\$1,040.25	\$92.25	\$378.75	\$1,520.01

b) Water Only Customers

The minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown above but the Wastewater Commodity Charge will be excluded.

c) Wastewater Only for Residential Customers

The wastewater only charge is based on average quarterly consumption of 9,000 gallons plus the quarterly customer service charge.

The quarterly charge for wastewater only customers is $(9 * \$1.23) + \$8.76 = \$19.83$.

1. Schedule of Commodity Rates & Quarterly Service Charge

January 1, 2022

Rates per 1,000 Gallons

1,000 Gallons per quarter

Water	Wastewater	Water & Wastewater
\$14.98	\$1.14	\$16.12

Quarterly Service Charge \$9.16

2. Minimum Charges per Quarter

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

d) Water & Wastewater Customers

Meter Size	Water Included (Gallons)	Customer Service Charge	Water Commodity Charge	Wastewater Commodity Charge	Deficit Rate Rider \$5.05/1,000	Water & Wastewater Total Quarterly Minimum
5/8 inch	3,000	\$9.16	\$44.94	\$3.42	\$15.15	\$72.67
¾ inch	6,000	\$9.16	\$89.88	\$6.84	\$30.30	\$136.18
1 inch	12,000	\$9.16	\$179.76	\$13.68	\$60.60	\$263.20
1 ½ inch	30,000	\$9.16	\$449.40	\$34.20	\$151.50	\$644.26
2 inch	75,000	\$9.16	\$1,123.50	\$85.50	\$378.75	\$1,596.91

e) Water Only Customers

The minimum charge will be the same for each meter size as shown above but the Wastewater Commodity Charge will be excluded.

f) Wastewater Only for Residential Customers

The wastewater only charge is based on average quarterly consumption of 9,000 gallons plus the quarterly customer service charge.

The quarterly charge for wastewater only customers is $(9 * \$1.14) + \$9.16 = \$19.42$.

The following clauses take effect July 1, 2019:3. Deficit Rate Rider

Deficit Rate Rider of \$5.05 per 1,000 gallons of consumption, commencing June 1, 2019 for the 2009 through 2019 deficits is calculated based on a 5-year recovery period as follows:

2009 Actual Audited Deficit	\$62,629
2010 Actual Audited Deficit	\$49,209
2011 Actual Audited Deficit	\$45,346
2012 Actual Audited Deficit	\$43,511
2013 Actual Audited Deficit	\$126,847
2014 Actual Audited Deficit	\$54,103
2015 Actual Audited Deficit	\$6,670
2016 Actual Audited Deficit	\$30,658
2017 Actual Audited Deficit	\$23,334
2018 Budgeted Deficit	\$5,175
2019 Budgeted Deficit	\$11,335

4. Billings And Penalties

Accounts shall be billed quarterly based on water used. A late payment charge of 1.25% compounded monthly shall be charged on the dollar amount owing after the billing due date. The due date will be at least 20 days after the mailing of the bills.

5. Hydrant Charges

The Municipality of Lorne, or any other hydrant owner, will pay to the Utility an annual fee of \$5,000 for the purpose of maintaining and repairing all fire hydrants connected to the system which shall include the cost of water used for firefighting.

6. Liability for Charges

Pursuant to Section 252(2) of *The Municipal Act*, the amount of all outstanding charges for water and wastewater services, including fines and penalties, are a lien and charge upon the land serviced, and may be collected in the same manner in which ordinary taxes upon the land are collectible, and with like remedies.

7. Meter Testing

That in any case where a utility customer requests that a meter be tested for accuracy, the customer will provide the Municipality with a deposit of \$100. The Municipality will then remove the subject meter and send it to an independent lab for testing. If the meter is found to be faulty, all costs associated with the testing process will be borne by the Municipality and the deposit will be refunded to the customer and the customer's account will be adjusted for the preceding four months. If the meter is found to be in proper working order, all costs associated with the testing process will be borne by the customer and the customer will be billed or refunded any balance owing.

8. Change in Meter Size

A customer may upon application to the Municipal Council, be granted a change in water meter size so as to more accurately reflect the required consumption of water throughout the year. However, if for some reason that same customer applies for a reversal involving a water meter change back to the original size, that customer them must pay for all costs pertaining to the reversal plus a fee of \$25.00.

9. Meter Reading

All customers shall submit a quarterly meter reading within the last 10 calendar days of March, June, September, and December. Customers may submit the meter reading by phone, e-mail or in person during normal business hours at the municipal office. Failure by any customer to complete and submit the quarterly meter reading by the due date will result in an estimate of the water consumption for that customer for the specified quarter. The estimate shall be based on the average consumption per quarter in the previous year, or in the case of a new customer the estimate shall be based on the average quarterly residential consumption.

All Estimated reading shall be subject to a \$25.00 administration fee. Should a customer wish to dispute an estimated reading, a request to waive the fee must be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer. Customers may appeal the CAO's decision in writing to Council.

10. Disconnection and Reconnection

The Public Utilities Board has approved the Conditions Precedent to be followed by the Municipality with respect to 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 is available for inspection at the Municipality's office.

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.

11. Service to Customers Outside Utility's Limits

The Council of Municipality of Lorne may sign Agreements with customers for the provision of water and wastewater services to properties located outside the boundaries of the Municipality. Such Agreements shall provide for payment of the appropriate rates set out in this 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 the 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 the Municipality's boundaries. In addition, all costs of connecting to the Utility's mains, and installing and maintaining service connections, will be paid by the customer.

12. Water Allowance Due to Line Freezing

That in any case where, at the request of Council, 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 two previous quarters to the same customer, or to the same premises if the occupant has changed.

13. Wastewater Surcharges

- a) There may be levied annually, in addition to the rates set forth above, a special surcharge on wastewater 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 wastewater or industrial waste.

14. 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 Municipality's water system.

If a condition is found to exist which, in the opinion of the Municipality, is contrary to the aforesaid, the Municipality 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.

15. Conditions of Disrepair

In the event that there are conditions of disrepair in the wastewater and water works on a property that detrimentally affects the system as a whole and, upon the failure of the owner of the property to correct the condition within a reasonable time, the Municipality, or its agents, may enter the property, effect repairs and charge the cost thereof against the subject property as ordinary taxes.

16. Authorization for Officer to Enter Upon Premises

The Public Works Manager, or other employee authorized by the Municipality 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 Municipality.