

### Utilities Business Line Information

#### ISSUE

As the City of Saskatoon (City) heads into its planning for the 2024 and 2025 Business Plan and Budget Cycle, there continues to be several budgetary pressures the City is facing. This report will provide information and Administrative recommendations on the Utilities Business Line.

This process has been established so that City Council can provide early direction to the Administration, on what to include in the 2024/2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget which will be considered by City Council in November 2023 during the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget deliberation meeting.

#### BACKGROUND

At its March 15, 2023 meeting when considering the [2023-2025 Budgetary Pressures and Trends](#) Report, Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) resolved in part:

“That Administration report back on a potential special budget meeting process to address some of the budgetary challenges and pressures for the upcoming two-year budget cycle. That this report include recommendations on using the existing Governance and Priorities Committee/Finance Committee meeting schedule vs. having special budget/Finance committee meetings and recommendations for organizing these special budget meetings based on departmental budgets or based on service lines or some combination.”

At its April 12, 2023 meeting when considering the [2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget Process Report](#), GPC resolved:

“That Option 3 be approved, and the City Clerk’s office be directed to schedule Special Budget Meetings for the presentation of Business Line-based reports if the Governance and Priorities Committee Capacity does not exist as outlined in the April 12, 2023 report of the Chief Financial Office.”

#### CURRENT STATUS

The multi-year business plan and budget process includes the following key steps:

1. Develop the cost to maintain existing services considering city growth, inflation pressures, and updated revenue estimates. This step is also used to present and discuss required corrections of base budgets and phase-in of funding plans.
2. Provide a summary of the information from Step 1 to the GPC.
3. Use cross-divisional teams to discuss City Council’s strategic priorities and develop options to achieve these priorities.
4. Present a list of Business Plan Options to City Council for prioritization.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Each business line report presented through the Governance and Priorities or through the Special Budget Meetings will have the same general outline to provide information to City Council. The categories in each report will be:

1. Expenditure Overview
2. Service Level Review
3. Pandemic Challenges
4. 2024/2025 Pressures
5. Potential Options

Appendix 1 includes the information for the Utilities business line. The Utilities Business Line includes service lines pertaining to five utilities: Saskatoon Light & Power, Storm Water Management, Water, Wastewater and Waste Services.

## OPTIONS

**Option 1** - Eliminate Investment Practice by SL&P for New Street Lighting

**Option 2** - Update Schedule of Fees in Bylaw 2685- The Electric Light and Power Bylaw, 1940

**Option 3** - Change Non-Residential Water and Sewer Connection Boundaries

**Option 4** - Adjust Service of Auguring Customer Sewer Connections

**Option 5** - Revise Net Metering Incentive Program

**Option 6** - Create ROI from Storm Water Utility

**Option 7** - Increase Water and Wastewater Utility Rates to Increase ROI

**Option 8** - Extend Repair Time on Watermain Breaks

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance and Priorities Committee direct Administration to include the following options in the 2024/2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget, with the savings to be maintained within the respective utility to offset rates and/or support asset management needs:

1. Option 1 – Eliminate Investment Practice by SL&P for New Street Lighting;
2. Option 2 - Update Schedule of Fees in Bylaw 2685- The Electric Light and Power Bylaw, 1940;
3. Option 3 - Change Non-Residential Water and Sewer Connection Boundaries;
4. Option 4a – Eliminate Service of Auguring Customer Sewer Connections; and
5. Option 5a – Revise Net Metering Incentive Program, grandfathering customers prior to November 2019.

## RATIONALE

The provided recommendations aim to strike a balance in addressing the significant cost pressures the City is facing heading into 2024/2025 with a more reasonable

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property tax increase. While the savings could be used to increase the Return on Investment from the respective utilities, the Administration is recommending that these savings be maintained within the utility to offset the need to increase utility rates and/or address asset management pressures.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of this business line will be deliberated at the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations meeting.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Any direction from Committee on this report will be incorporated into the 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget process. Decisions for 2024/2025 Business Plan and Budget will be made by City Council during the budget deliberation meeting which will be held on November 28 to 30, 2023 where the budget implications of all business lines will be deliberated.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Utilities Business Line

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Written by: Brian Casey, Senior Financial Business Partner  
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Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

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