



# VILLAGE OF BELCARRA

*"Between Forest and Sea"*

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## **Belcarra Potable Water Infrastructure Project Questions & Answers Commuting Costs and Connection Requirements**

On April 27, 2012 notice was sent to all property owners in the Belcarra Potable Water Local Area Service informing of the opportunity to make a one-time payment for the capital project costs. Below are the answers to a number of questions as a result of the notice. If your property is located in the local area service (map attached) and you did not receive a letter please contact the Municipal Hall at 604-937-4101.

- 1. There is a choice between a one-time payment of \$18,127.65 or pay a parcel tax that is estimated at \$1,184. Will this annual amount change based on the annual interest rates for this loan from the Municipal Finance Authority? What is the current interest rate?**

The actual parcel tax, which will become effective next year in 2013, will be determined once the rate is fixed at the fall, September 2012 borrowing. The estimate presented in the letter is consistent with the information Council and the public received in October 2011, which was based on a 25 year term for the loan and the Municipal Finance Authority's Fall Debenture Issue at 4.13% interest. In actual fact, the Spring 2012 MFA Debenture Issue was at 3.40% interest.

- 2. Why is May 31 the deadline for making my one-time payment?**

To meet the Fall Borrowing timeframe desired to secure low interest rates before the Bank of Canada rumoured increase, it must be known by the beginning of June how many will commute the costs. Bylaws must be drafted, adopted and Belcarra must make its submission to Metro Vancouver (MV) by end of June, in time for MV Committee and Board approval in July. The MV Board does not meet in August and MV's submission must be to MFA in August to be included in the fall (September) MFA borrowing.

- 3. I assume that the authorized sum of \$4,967,032 will be adjusted once the Village knows how many residences will be making the one-time payment. Might the annual parcel tax increase?**

The authorized sum (maximum that may be borrowed) will be adjusted downward by the total amount received from one time payments. The annual parcel tax would increase if the Fall MFA Debenture interest rate is higher than the estimate of 4.13% used for calculating the amount in the letter.

- 4. Why is there now a \$149 charge for the operation and maintenance for fire protection purposes – for half year (July to December). I had understood that the old partial coverage fire hydrant system was paid for with our previous taxes and now the new water system has paid for the capital costs of the new hydrant system that covers most of the Village.**

The “previous water system” has been expanded and is part of the “new water system”. The “new water system” is now a stand-alone water utility. The operating and maintenance costs that were previously part of the general municipal operating budget for the fire hydrant system, are now transferred to the water utility budget because there remains a number of operating costs specific to maintaining the Fire Protection rating i.e. flushing, hydrant inspection, teardowns & painting, reservoir maintenance (the full reservoir storage capacity is only a requirement for Fire Flows) Fire Pump weekly testing and annual servicing, exercising hydrant isolation valves, etc. The water utility is being treated like the Recycling & Refuse, such that the operating costs are shared among the property owners that have benefit of fire protection and ability to connect to the water utility.

- 5. What is required for operating and maintaining the new water system**

The operating and maintenance costs for 2012 are significant in terms of commissioning and operating the system on which Municipal staff are spending a significant portion of their time and efforts. Moving from a non-potable fire protection water supply to a Municipal potable water supply and distribution system carries a significant Public Health responsibility for due diligence and accountability. The operation of the water supply can no longer be considered an ancillary function of Public Works. It requires learning the system’s operational and monitoring functions and carrying-out the associated responsibilities. Therefore, most of the O&M costs consist of staff labour costs.

Fraser Health requires a high level of competency from the utility owner and operators. In addition to a higher level of Certification, Fraser Health Authority (FHA) requires Emergency Response Plans, weekly sampling and testing procedures, chlorination and de-chlorination protocols defined within approved operational procedures, all of which must be in place prior to commissioning the utility. In order to prepare those site or system specific procedures a high level of operational familiarity is required. On a daily basis staff are learning the various operational characteristics of the system. The simple matter of isolating a section of water main in the event of a leak, such as a vehicle damaging a fire hydrant or a failed air relief valve, requires operational knowledge based on experience and practice.

Portions of the system have been fully charged, disinfected, tested and flushed since March, meaning that in order to maintain acceptable chlorine residual levels, in the absence of residential consumption, staff have been regularly moving water through the system. Staff must also be available during off hours, weekends and holidays to respond to the Village to mitigate any problems. Incidences to-date requiring staff response include: partially open service vault leaking, separated service pipe leak, fire pump operating, broken service vault lid.

- 6. What sections of the BC Plumbing Code do I have to comply with?**

Water pipe spec, water pipe depth, PRV valve and shutoff valve inside the residence prior to installing the water meter. Part 7 or the BC Building Code (BCBC) specifies all of the above requirements. At any time the Village can provide the necessary information based on the property’s specific requirements. In order to provide a higher level of information staff have

been working on Belcarra specific standards to allow for the more challenged properties to comply with the BCBC, i.e. standards for water service pipe located above grade. The “go live” date is scheduled for August based on satisfying FHA requirements for operations, service bylaws in place, and operator certification.

**7. What will the Building Inspector look for when inspecting the water lines prior to backfilling?**

The inspection requirements will be a 24” trench, sand bedded. The water pipe will be sized to meet the home’s existing Fixture Unit requirements or larger to accommodate future re-development of the property. The water pipe will terminate at a shut-off valve located within 1 meter of entering the building. A Pressure Relief Valve (PRV) will be required for those homes served with more than 70 PSI street pressure. If a PRV is installed, a separate relief valve or expansion tank will be required to prevent Thermal Expansion pressure build-up behind the PRV. The system from the street to the shut-off valve will be tested to an approved pressure prior to connecting the meter. The whole trench and system data will be photographed and digitally recorded for back-up and field reference.

**8. Can I plan for the future by installing a large (say 3”) pipe and have it inspected, so that a water line could be installed inside it at a future date without disturbing the finished driveway or landscaping?**

Yes, that is a common means to allow for future replacement or upsizing in the event of redevelopment of a property.

**9. There are contactors offering services to install hook ups to the water system. What are the hook-up requirements?**

The BC Building Code requirements are known to the contractors. The additional information will be captured in the Service Connection Bylaw that will include standards for the more challenged lots that will require specific approval not directly referenced in the BCBC (above grade) as well as waivers to allow staff to pressure test the service pipe instead of a plumber. The Village is assisting some property owners with a partial inspection of the trench and service pipe only. These installations are inspected, photographed and recorded with the intention to catch-up at a later date with a formal application, permit and collection of fees.

**10. When will the Village have a water installation guide to give to residents?**

Staff is seeking clarification from adjacent municipalities on the test pressure as there is still a difference of opinion on the topic. To date, the majority of staff’s time has been required for the construction aspect of this project. As the construction demands lessen, staff is diverting their efforts to preparing the administration documents such as the requisite bylaws for the utility operations and connection standards, water connection applications and information guidelines. Water applications will be available from the municipal office June 15.

**11. I have already had one contractor give me a verbal quote to hook up a pipe to the water vault. Is this being done at other properties or do I have to wait until August to have this work done?**

You do not need to wait until August to install the conduit and/or water line. Other homeowners are already installing their water lines. The August date refers to commencing water usage; that is, to installing the water meter and turning on the valve, provided that FHA requirements are satisfied for operations and operator certification is in place.

