



**United Way**  
**Bruce Grey**

Give. Volunteer. Act.

# Sewer and Water Community Conversation

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Operations Committee, City of Owen Sound  
Francesca Dobbyn, Executive Director

November 21<sup>st</sup> 2024



# Purpose of engaging

1. Overview of Utility Assistance Program
2. Data & capacity
3. Question – discussion on more frequent billing
4. Emerging concern – suite meters



# Utility Assistance Program

The United Way of Bruce Grey's Utility Assistance Program provides grants, of up to \$700 per funding source or utility, to low-income residents.

- The accounts need to be in arrears or are at risk of disconnection, or are already disconnected.
- Applicants must meet strict income guidelines
- Fundraised dollars support furnace oil, propane, wood (cord or wood pellets)
- ONLY Meaford and Owen Sound for sewer and water arrears (\$500 grant only)



## Sewer and Water assistance provided

2024	4	\$	4,417.47
2023	5	\$	3,373.83
2022	1	\$	900.00
2021	4	\$	2,674.01
2020	3	\$	2,453.01
2019	3	\$	1,784.70
2018	9	\$	4,535.54
2017	10	\$	4,535.54
2016	7	\$	3,318.96

Monthly billing has proven to reduce bad debt



# Owen Sound data – November 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

**How many residential accounts are 6 months or more past due?** 101

**What is the value of those arrears?**

**Arrears dollars greater than 6 months past due.** \$15,869.07

Does not include any amounts previously transferred to the tax roll or any billed amounts less than 6 months old

**Total arrears amount outstanding on all accounts** \$71,696.03

**How many disconnection notices are currently active?** 4

**How many residential customers are currently disconnected?** None



# Owen Sound Sewer and Water data

	# households	helped	arrears	granted	avg grant	referred	processing
2018	23	15	\$14,476.57	\$7,368.77	\$491.25	8	
2019	19	14	\$16,069.42	\$6,656.19	\$475.44	5	
2020	18	13	\$14,226.83	\$6,365.83	\$489.68	5	
2021	21	15	\$16,125.63	\$8,558.39	\$570.56	6	
2022	19	4	\$16,739.70	\$1,874.75	\$468.69	15	
2023	19	8	\$16,589.45	\$4,206.33	\$525.79	11	
2024 YTD	11	4	\$7,708.18	\$1,769.69	\$442.42	3	4

Change starts here.



SHB Water Report (Grey County)			
Year	Amount	Households	Amt per Request (avg)
2022	\$ 66,389.30	89	\$ 745.95
2023	\$ 32,178.39	43	\$ 748.33
2024 (Oct 1st)	\$ 21,749.57	28	\$ 776.77



## What is a “suite meter”?

Each unit has its own meter and is billed with full usage and all fees explained on the bill

Utility meter to the building

Suite meters are electrical or natural gas meters that a landlord can install in residential rental units to measure how much of the utility is used by each unit in a building. Where a suite meter is installed in a unit, the meter records only the amount of utility used by that specific unit.





## Emerging issue: suite meters

New Skyline owned and operated building in Port Elgin

Has a single suite meter company “Wyse Meters” that bills:

- Natural gas
- Electricity
- Saugeen Shores Water

Suite meters are safe and regulated by the relevant governing body (Ontario Energy Board) etc.

Giving people control over their utilities are excellent for providing direct feedback on usage



# What's the issue?

- Customer service rules
- No disconnection ban – they are under landlord tenant board for customer service rules, not the OEB
- With 3 utilities, how do you pay one?
- How will they bill monthly if City is only billing landlord every 3 months?