

Staff Report

Report To: Operations Committee
Report From: Bryce McDonald, Manager of Water and Wastewater
Meeting Date: April 23, 2026
Report Code: OP-26-010
Subject: Bulk Water Sales and Application

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report OP-26-010 respecting Bulk Water Sales and Application, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- The City is implementing a new bulk water sales application which helps to:
 - Define roles and expectations
 - Clarify established service levels
 - Provides an opportunity to clean up non-active accounts
 - Updates user contact information for future communications
 - Addresses outstanding liability concerns

Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

Previous Report/Authority:

N/A

Background:

The City of Owen Sound offers bulk water sales to registered customers via an automated bulk water fill station located at the Public Works Yard (1900 20th St. East). Customers who set up an account can access the filling station during regular business hours by using a magnetic key fob and unique PIN code. Outside of business hours, the yard gate is locked and therefore the station cannot be accessed. Registered customers are billed monthly for consumption plus an administrative fee to cover the invoicing process. The filling station has become quite popular and is utilized by a variety of customers from bulk drinking water haulers to sewer inspection/cleaning services, directional drilling, hydroseeding, landscaping, paving and many others. Although the bulk water fill station provides a valuable service and helps control unauthorized water taking and unnecessary use of hydrants, the current set-up poses several challenges including:

- User Account Management
- Insurance/Liability
- Location and congestion
- Connection size and fill rate
- Access limited to facility operating hours
- Cross-Contamination Risks

It is in the City's best interest to maintain a bulk water filling station as this ensures:

- Maximization of revenue generation (minimizes use of non-revenue water sources);
- Reduces the need/justification for contractors to use fire hydrants; and
- Reduces the potential of contamination and damage to the distribution system.

The City earned \$18,000 in bulk water revenue in 2025.

Analysis and Options:

Success in delivering this service includes maintaining an up-to-date customer database to ensure timely communications, for example for billing and out-of-service notifications. As part of the implementation of this program, all existing customers will be asked to complete the application, thereby ensuring current contact information. Facilitating communication will also increase customer satisfaction.

Staff have developed a new, straightforward application form that reflects the provider-customer relationship.

Developed with legal review, the new application form clearly defines the filling station conditions of use and termination provisions to manage the City's risk and liability.

The application includes disclaimers requiring users to carry liability insurance naming the City as an additional insured. It also describes the limitations of the City's responsibility with respect to disinfection of the filling connection and that the City cannot guarantee water quality once it is being dispensed. This is due to the current filling method being via direct connection, similar to the way a fire truck would connect to a hydrant; because the City has no control over the level of disinfection the various customers apply to their vehicles and equipment, the City must protect itself from liability should the load be affected as a result. The new bulk water sales application will help address these concerns.

Challenges related to location, connection size, fill rate and access are growing concerns that are being monitored as use of the filling station grows and the Public Works Yard becomes more congested. City staff have been investigating off-site solutions that would provide better service and access.

Resource Alignment:

Financial Resources

No additional financial resources were required to develop the new application, and existing resources are adequate to support its implementation. Future facility upgrades will be presented for consideration during the capital budget review process.

Human Resources

No additional Human Resources are needed to execute the new application process.

Time and Scheduling

Customers with email addresses on file will receive new applications; for those without email addresses on file, they will need to complete the application in-person at Public Works before their account is re-activated.

Technology and Infrastructure

No new technology or infrastructure is required at this time.

Climate and Environmental Impacts:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Communication and Engagement:

Customers with email addresses on file will receive an email with new application form and information will be post on the City of Owen Sounds Water page.

Report Developed in Consultation With:

The new application form was developed in consultation with Kristen Van Alphen, Manager of Legislative Services, and Lauren Stewart, Purchasing and Claims Coordinator.

Attachments:

Bulk Water User Application

Reviewed by:

Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Bryce McDonald, Manager of Water and Wastewater at bmcdonald@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 x 3224.