

May 5, 2021

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Travis Rob, Manager of Operations and Facilities

RE: Request for Sewer Rooting Reimbursement – 324 Third Street West

The Town has received a request from Ms. Wendy Bell at 324 Third Street West for reimbursement of sewer rooting that had been completed by Do Rite Plumbing (John Marcus). The invoice was for \$250.00 + \$32.50 HST for a total of \$282.50. The work was performed on or about April 26, 2021. The invoice from Mr. Marcus indicates the location of the blockage was 60 feet out and roots were the cause of the blockage. Due to Covid-19 work restrictions, Town employees are not entering private buildings for work, including sewer rooting.

Town Bylaw 06/16 speaks to sewer blockages caused by tree roots, as follows:

2.6 Blockage - tree roots - liability

Where a sewer service blockage is caused by tree roots and the tree is located on Town property, the Town may assume liability for costs involved in clearing such blockage. Where the tree is located on private property and causes the blockage of a sewer service then the Owner of the property shall be liable for all of the cost involved in clearing the blockage. The Engineer shall be the sole judge of the location of the problem and as to whether or not the Owner is to be charged with any of the cost.

2.19 Maintenance responsibility - service lateral - building sewer - charges When authorized by the property Owner the Town will perform maintenance work with respect to cleaning of the service lateral and/or building sewer only. The Owner or Authorized representative of the Owner shall give the Town written authorization to perform such work by executing the appropriate Work Requisition form. The charge for maintenance services shall be determined as follows:

- a) A minimum service charge as outlined in the current Town's User Fee By-law will be charged to the Owner for maintenance services.
- b) Where it is determined by the Town that the location of the obstruction is on the Owner's property all charges incurred, less the minimum service charge shall be paid by the Owner.
- c) Where it is determined by the Town that the location of the obstruction is on the Town's property. This only applies to normal service laterals, property line to main (normally approximately ten (10) metres or thirty-three (33) feet) and not those made under special agreement with the Town. The Town may assume all costs for maintenance services to clear the blockage, except for the minimum service charge.
- d) Where it is discovered that the service obstruction is the direct result of a person(s) charging or depositing items, i.e. female hygiene products, paper towels, etc. other than those deemed normal every day usage, regardless of the location of the obstruction (Owner's or Town's property), the Owner shall be responsible for the costs of the work done to clear the obstruction.

When the Town's employees perform sewer rooting services, the following charges may be incurred (all based on work being done during normal working hours):

- Minimum Charges (regardless of where the blockage is): \$26.
- Minimum Charge if blockage is on owner's property or owner is at fault: \$118.00 per hour. (A typical sewer rooting is a one-hour charge).

The town does not charge HST on sewer rooting work.

The Town continues to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and imposes work restrictions to ensure the safety of Town employees. Not entering private buildings for sewer work was one of the restrictions implemented. However, this limitation is only imposed when the area is in 'Orange – Restrict' or worse colour codes. At the time of the plugged sewer the Town was not doing in-house work.

There is not a lot of history on this property since the early 80's as the service was lined with a PVC pipe from the house to the main at that time. Prior to 1982 there were a number of plugged sewers all with roots.

It is the recommendation of Administration to not reimburse his sewer rooting request as roots are prevalent in the existing clay sewer and the 4" PVC liner is not sealed at both ends from root intrusion. In addition there are large trees in the property owners front yard, a Google Streetview picture of the property is included.

It is the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that:

1. That the private invoice be reimbursed the difference between the costs for the Town to complete the works (\$118.00) and the actual invoice (\$282.50) totalling \$164.50.
2. That each case be considered individually going forward.
3. And that only works completed during the service reduction period related specifically to COVID-19 be considered.

Respectfully Submitted



Travis Rob, P.Eng
Manager of Operations and Facilities

Council approval of this report will agree with the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that:

- 1. That the private invoice be reimbursed the difference between the costs for the Town to complete the works (\$118.00) and the actual invoice (\$282.50) totalling \$164.50.**
- 2. That each case be considered individually going forward.**
- 3. And that only works completed during the service reduction period related specifically to COVID-19 be considered.**