

October 19, 2020

Report To: Travis Rob, P.Eng., Manager of Operations & Facilities

From: Craig Miller, P.Eng., Environmental Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** Sewer Rooting – Request for Reimbursement

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The Town has received a request from Ms. Jennifer Woods at 415 Second Street East for reimbursement of sewer rooting that they had completed by Do-Rite Plumbing (John Marcus). The invoice was for \$175.00 + \$22.75 HST for a total of \$197.75. The work was performed on or about May 11, 2020.

The invoice indicates the location of the blockage but does not indicate the cause of the blockage. The location is specified to be 75 feet out.

The property owner had initially requested rooting services from the Town. Due to Covid-19 work restrictions, Town employees were not entering private buildings for work, including sewer rooting. Because of the Covid-19 work restrictions, we had been referring work out to local plumbers.

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) discharging 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): \$26.50

Minimum Charge if blockage is on owner's property or owner is at fault: \$117.40 per hour. (A typical sewer rooting is a one-hour charge).

The town does not charge HST on sewer rooting work.

The Town adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic in March and imposed work restrictions to ensure the safety of Town employees. Not entering private buildings for sewer work was one of the restrictions implemented. Unfortunately, this restriction has meant that the Town has not been able to offer sewer rooting services unless the property has an outdoor cleanout. The Town has since resumed sewer rooting services on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Because the work was completed by private contractors, we cannot validate the location of the blockage, if any foreign materials were found or if roots were also encountered on the property owner's side of the property line.

415 Second Street East is a treed property with a history of plugged sewers on the owner's side of the property line. A CCTV inspection of the sewer service was completed in 2016. The sewer service is mostly clay tile except near the sewer main where the sweep into the main is PVC. Roots were present at most joints.

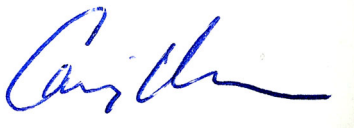
On October 5, 2020, we completed a CCTV inspection after receiving complaints from Ms. Woods after she had been advised by the plumber who did the rooting in May that the roots were on the Town side of the property line and the Town had always told them that the roots were on their side of the property line. The CCTV inspection showed roots

at most of the joints of the service line (approx. every 3-4 feet) as soon as the sewer line left the basement of the house until under the road bed.

It is my recommendation that we do not reimburse this sewer rooting request as roots are present throughout the owner's portion of the sewer service.

A Google Street View picture is attached of the property.

Respectfully submitted,



Craig Miller, P.Eng.  
Environmental Superintendent

Attached:

- Invoice from Ms. Woods
- Imaging of 415 Second Street East
- Property File information – 415 Second Street East

OUR NUMBER

294219

DATE

MAY 11 2020

CUSTOMER'S ORDER

SOLD TO

TIM WOOD'S

ADDRESS

415 2ND ST E

FORT FRANCES

SHIP TO

DO-RITE PLUMBING

ADDRESS

PO 565

FORT FRANCES

P9A 3179

TAX REG. NO.

899731418

SALESPERSON

FOB

TERMS

VIA

QUANTITY

DESCRIPTION

PRICE

AMOUNT

UNPLUG SEWER LINE (MAIN)

175 00

APPROX BLOCKAGE WAS 75'  
OUT

HST

22 75

TOTAL

197 75

INVOICE



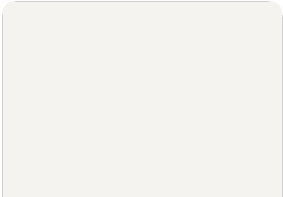


Image capture: Oct 2015 © 2020 Google

Fort Frances, Ontario



Street View





# MAINTENANCE RECORD

ADDRESS: 415 SECOND STREET EAST

DATE	REMARKS
OCT 28/80	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER. PLUGGED AT PROPERTY LINE (ROOTS)
NOV 10/82	" " " " AT MAIN
FEB 27/83	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - PLUGGED AT MAIN
JULY 24/84	" " " " PLUGGED ?
SEPT 24/84	" " " " ?
SEPT 30/03	REPLACED LEAD WATER SERVICE WITH 19MM COPPER, NEW CURB STOP, S.S. ROD & SERVICE BOX. NOTE: SEWER IS 150MM CLAY TILE AND IS JUST BESIDE & LOWER THAN WATER.
DEC 31/07	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - BLOCKAGE 20' TO 60' FROM CLOIN HOUSE - ROOTS, FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS.

DATE	REMARKS
OCTOBER 9, 2008	BLOCKAGE - 20' TO MAIN - ROOTS - 50/50 SPLIT
JAN. 25, 2010	BLOCKAGE @ 60' - TAMPONS - OWNER BILLED
AUGUST 16, 2010	BLOCKAGE @ 20'-60' - TREE ROOTS - BILLED
NOVEMBER 29, 2011	BLOCKAGE @ 20'-60' - ROOTS & RAGS - BILLED
APR 2/13	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - 20-60' SM. OBSTRUCTIONS, PAPER TOWEL BACK
APRIL 30/15	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - ROOTS @ 55'
MAY 3/16	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - ROOTS @ 32'
MAY 25/16	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - PUG & BUN TOILET & C/L
JUNE 16/16	CLEANED PLUGGED SEWER - FEM HYGIENE PRODUCTS @ 37'. CCTV'D
	- SHOWED ROOTS. CLEANED AGAIN - ROOTS & CLOTH BACK
NOV 8/18	<del>FOR</del> CLEANED SEWER SERVICE @ OWNER'S REQUEST (NOT PLUGGED)
	- ROOTS @ 20 & 40 FT