

DATE: May 12, 2025

REPORT NO: O-09-2025

SUBJECT: **Small Container Water Fill Station**

CONTACT: Tray Benish, Manager, Operations, ORO
Mike DiPaola, P. Eng., Director, Infrastructure

OVERVIEW:

- During the February 18, 2025 Corporate Services Committee meeting, the topic of the small container water fill station, located at the Operations Department yard (6218 London Road), was discussed.
- Administration have gathered the historical background on this water fill station, and have presented it in this report.
- Administration have looked into three different service options in regards to this water fill station and the possible financial/administrative implications each one poses.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Recommendation Report O-09-2025 titled, "Small Container Water Fill Station", dated May 12, 2025, be received; and
2. That, Administration proceed with Option ____.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #4

- **Advance** – organizational capacity and effectiveness

BACKGROUND:

The small container water fill station is located at 6218 London Road in Smithville, as part of the Operations Departments property. It is a small building separate from the main Operations building. The building is used by the Water Department to store parts/supplies.

A water line was installed to this building sometime in the 1990's to supply free water for the rural residents of West Lincoln to use. The water line flows through a water meter and backflow preventer inside the building, then proceeds out the southern wall to a spout. There is a switch located outside the building, next to the spout, for residents to turn on/off the water feed as they fill containers.

There is currently no tracking feature associated with this setup to see who is using it. Water consumption volumes are tracked by the water meter on a quarterly basis.

Administration have determined that the free water service was initially setup for the rural residents in the industrial park area of West Lincoln to utilize, as there were water quality concerns from those well users. This service has continued since that time.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Administration have gathered what the usage and annual costs were to the Township by providing this free water service to residents. In 2024 the water consumption totalled 787 m³ at a total cost to the Township of \$3,467.38 (based on 2024 water and wastewater rates). Data was collected for the previous 25 years, going back to 1999. The data shows the water consumption annual average is 725.46m³.

Administration have explored three possible options, and the cost/service impacts each one has, in determining the best route to move forward with this service.

Option 1:

Leaving the water service as is with no changes. There will continue to be a small cost each year to provide the service free of charge, and this option has no impact on the residents currently using it.

Option 2:

Remove the water service completely. This will eliminate the annual cost to the Township, but may raise concerns from residents that currently use this service.

Option 3:

Installing a “Pay Station” similar to the station located at the large bulk water hauler station located at corner of London Road and Thompson Road. This option could provide a small revenue stream for the Township of approximately \$1,735 per year based on the historical consumption data of 725.46m³ per year, multiplied by the 2025 average bulk water rates. It is important to note that the annual consumption amounts will most likely be lower than the historical averages as a result of this pay station being implemented, as some residents will not want to pay for the water that was previously provided at no cost.

There will be a significant upfront cost of approximately \$3,000 - \$5,000 to install the station outside the building. The pay-back period under this option/scenario is approximately 2 to 3 years, assuming that the revenue levels remain consistent. This will also increase the demand on Administration in setting up/managing the small water fill station accounts, which will add additional pressure to existing Township resources. With the anticipated reduction in use, the pay-back period for the initial upfront cost is likely to be extended.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration supports either Option 1 or Option 2 listed above.

For Option 1, continuing to provide the water service free of charge ensures consistent, equitable access to safe drinking water for all residents, particularly those who rely on it most. With average annual costs remaining relatively low and predictable over the past 25 years, this option represents a minimal financial impact to the Township while preserving a valued community service. Maintaining the status quo avoids the upfront costs, administrative burden, and potential public dissatisfaction associated with implementing fees or removing the service entirely.

For Option 2, removing this service will eliminate the annual cost to the Township, but may raise concerns from residents that currently use this service. By eliminating this service, it will also mitigate any potential liability risk/concerns as outlined below:

Property Damage; if a resident or visitor uses this fill station and accidentally causes damage to the Township's property, the Township could potentially be held responsible for repair or even legal cost.

Personal Injury or Accidents; If someone were to get injured while using the fill water station, through trip and falls or accidents involving vehicles, the Township could be held liable.

Negligence Claims; Negligence could occur if the Township fails to properly maintain the site and/or station, leading to unsafe conditions. For instance, if the equipment malfunctions or not checked for cleanliness and someone becomes sick from it, there could be a claim against the Township for negligence.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

If Option 1 is decided on, there will be an estimated annual cost of approximately \$3,500 to continue the supply of water.

If Option 2 is decided on, there will be a total approximate cost of \$500 in order to decommission the existing water service to the building.

If Option 3 is decided on, there will be an upfront cost of \$3,000-\$5,000 to establish a pay-per-use station. The Township may be able to recover these costs through revenue generation at the station, however the potential revenue and length of pay-back period is currently unknown, as water consumption is likely to decrease under this Option.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This report has been reviewed by the CAO, the Director of Corporate Services/CFO, and the Legislative Division.

CONCLUSION:

After a thorough review of the historical data, current usage, and potential future impacts, Administration recommends either Option 1 (continuing the existing free water service) or Option 2 (removing the water service) at the small container fill station.

SCHEDULE(S)

N/A

Prepared & Submitted by:

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