

Grace

From: [REDACTED]
To: Monday, July 15, 2024 2:32 PM
Subject: 'WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau'
RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED] - completed

Hello Emily,
I just received the Water Bill and see interest charges and reminder notice charges.
I understood you were going to waive those charges and I don't understand how I can possibly have interest charges when I overpaid.
The penalty is \$13.51 and I cannot afford such costs.
Please advise,

Thank you,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Avenue
Ottawa

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 1:38 PM
Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED] completed

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

A revised water bill has been issued for [REDACTED] Ave and covers the periods from February 12-May 12. The revised bill leaves you with a credit of \$75.56. Your following bill will be issued on July 24th and will include the meter change that took place on June 27th.

You can keep the credit on your water account which will be used towards your water bills in the future. Should you choose to get a refund, you can email revenue@ottawa.ca with your request or with any additional questions regarding the refund.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day,

[REDACTED], Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2024 4:42:56 PM

To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement [REDACTED]

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Hi Elizabeth,

They were all done by noon.

One took the old meter reading at 11:01 am: 909599.

I hope you will be able to correct the bills and return my overpayment.

Thank you for your help,
[REDACTED]

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 12:43 PM

[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

I have booked Kevin to come out for your appointment. Just a head's up, he can present as intimidating (tall, dark, broad) but is very kind.

Have a great day!

Elizabeth

Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services

City of Ottawa

100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East

Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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From: gracejodance@gmail.com <gracejodance@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 1:50:34 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - 279 Columbus Ave - re new appointment

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All set Elisabeth.

I spoke with Gui and he agreed that they will cut away what they need and clean up after their work. They will be sending 2 men on **Thursday, June 27th between 10 am and noon.**

Can you arrange for the City technician with the wet vacuum to come then?

Thank you,
Grace

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Friday, June 14, 2024 8:38 AM
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - 279 Columbus Ave - re Gui

H [REDACTED]

Gui told me his team has reached out, so if you give them a call back, hopefully, you won't get another confused call centre employee!

Have a great weekend!

Elisabeth
Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04555

From: gracejodance@gmail.com <gracejodance@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2024 2:19:57 PM

To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Hello Elisabeth,

I had called them, but the reception said they don't deal with the homeowner, only the city. I can try again and see if I happen to get a different receptionist, but I doubt the results will be any different.

I'll wait to hear.

Thank you,

Grace

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2024 10:03 AM

[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Apologies, [REDACTED] I emailed Neptune and have also not heard back. I shall do so again.

Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services

City of Ottawa

100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East

Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04555

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 10, 2024 5:50:11 PM

To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Subject: f/up Neptune Meter Replacement [REDACTED]

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Just following up as I haven't heard anything from the City.

Grace

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 6, 2024 11:45 AM
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Hello Elisabeth,

I called Neptune at the number you had previously given me. Samantha said that normally they only discuss with the City. She will pass my message onto the project manager. She said maybe the project manager will call the City about this arrangement, but normally it's the City that contacts them.

What do I do now?

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 4:03 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement [REDACTED]

Thank you Elisabeth,

If the City tech will come and do that, it will be great. I can also have a bunch of towels ready. I will call Neptune there now.

The last time I set the appointment, they were behind about 2 months...so let's hope.

[REDACTED]

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 3:21 PM
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I apologize for misunderstanding, thinking when you said "let them destroy the finished floor" it meant they offered to do so.

However, it seemed as if you were leaning towards the second option in your last email, anyway, which would be borrowing a wet vacuum and using towels and fans to capture the water and dry the floor when the meter was replaced. This option remains viable, and is the most practical one.

Neptune would not be able to provide a wet vac. However, the delay to this response was me trying to see if there was a way we could help. I learned that our techs have shop vacs in their trucks. I may be able to arrange to have a City tech come to the appointment with the shop vac to help, if the appointment is booked on a weekday morning. If that works for you, you can go ahead and book a weekday morning, and let me know when it is. I'll have a City tech join and bring their shop vac in to help clean up the water.

Does that work for you?

Elizabeth

Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04555

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 4:56:01 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Hi Elisabeth,

No, they never said anything about Neptune clearing anything. The first I learned of it was in your email. The day they were here consistently said it was my problem. My email is clear about what they said were my options and neither had anything to do with Neptune helping or clearing. They would not even provide a wet vac.

Well, this makes a difference. If Neptune did not 'offer' to clear anything, then I am back to square one. I am not getting myself into a predicament where Neptune (an American company) is going to do damage and I will have absolutely no recourse.

I need to contact the Ombudsman about this and see what my options are. Maybe I can find a pro-bono lawyer.

I will let you know. In the meantime, I understand that I will continue to be extorted with false invoices until I do what is financially impossible for me to do. I imagine at one point you will turn off the water too if I can't pay the false invoices, so this is likely to end up going very public.

[REDACTED]

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 12:21 PM
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Hi Grace,

My understanding that they offered to clear the area came from you email:

"They said I had two choices, to let them destroy the finished floor with jackhammers and repair the 2-ft square damage at my own expense, or let them run 5 gallons or more of water on the floor (which would naturally damage it) and I could have the water removed and the floor repaired at my expense."

I have not communicated with Neptune directly about this. Gui, however, would be the most likely person to have contacted you on the phone.

Thank you!

Elizabeth
Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04555

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 3:00:43 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Hello Elisabeth,
Thankyou for the info. You had made the statement that Neptune offered to clear the area. I was asking who told you that so that I could deal directly with them.

Is it Gui who made you that offer??

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 9:59 AM
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

HI [REDACTED]

I do not have any documentation about the offers made to you: only the photographs of the meter, which appears to be sitting on the ground. Any coordination would need to be between yourself and Neptune - whether with the tech or the supervisor.

I would presume that the person you spoke to on the phone was likely Gui, the project manager: he is much more able to tell you what rules and limits they have set for the techs. When you book the appointment, you can ask them to have Gui call you back: unlike myself, he can add notes directly onto the Neptune work orders. I'm not trying to be difficult: they are just very much going above the standard expectations, so I would not want to make promises or place limitations on what they can do onsite.

What I can say, from a perspective of cleaning up the water, is that a borrowed wet vacuum would likely make cleanup much easier, and can be dumped down the cleanout drain, limiting the weight going up and down the stairs.

If you have a few tabletop fans which could be moved to the basement, having towels to capture the water as it flows out and letting the fans run for a few days with the basement door open (for air circulation) would likely be enough to prevent damage to the floors. Most of the time, the amount of water spilled in a meter change wouldn't be much more than tripping over an over-full mop bucket. Silly as it sounds, a dish drain under the meter, directing the water to a pile of towels might be enough, and the tech should be able to move the meter higher off the floor so the next owner won't end up in the same situation.

Thank you for your patience with this! I'm here if you have any more questions, but also, once they've swapped your meter, email me and I'll ensure a new bill is issued right away. Normally, we would wait until your next billing cycle, so a head's up will let me get a jump on it.

Have a great day!

Elizabeth
Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04534

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 9:36:14 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Thank you Elisabeth,

What they told me was that there were two choices. A 2-foot square hole dug around the meter, deep enough to get their equipment under the meter, or that about 5 gals of water would leak out from where they cut the pipe. The guy could get his hand under the meter, but not his equipment. He had said that I could capture the water as it came out of the pipe when he cuts it, he can replace the meter no problem, so it's not that the meter is stuck in the floor or anything.

I asked the Neptune supervisor who spoke to me on the phone if it would work to have a wet vac there to suck up the water when it came out of the cut pipe and he said that was a great idea. He said he doesn't have a wet vac, that I would have to buy one and operate it myself. Given my condition there is no way I could carry a vac down there and then back up the stairs full of water, but I may be able to borrow one.

Who made the offer at Neptune? I should deal with them so there is no 'misunderstanding'. I guess if they will make the clearance and take the debris away, that would be helpful. Or, if they would handle the wet vac for me, I could have one for them.

But if I understood the technician correctly, he doesn't need to make a bigger hole if I don't mind having the pipe cut and the water from the house draining out.

I need to talk to the individual at Neptune that you spoke with so there is continuity.

Thank you for your help,
[REDACTED]

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 4:16 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

While I cannot guarantee that there would be no dust and debris, anything that was dug up by Neptune would be removed at the time. As I only have what you told me they offered, I cannot say for certain what tools they would use in order to expose the meter. What you described to me was that they offered to dig out a 2ft square around the meter. As this was not documented, and is - quite honestly - above and beyond the City's contract requirements, the Neptune tech is already going out of his way trying help. Rebooking with Neptune and - perhaps - asking the tech to contact you ahead of the appointment would be the best option to discuss this.

For historic building codes, you would need to speak to Building Code Services (calling 311 is your best bet, honestly), however, for what it is worth, they would not be much help. Old building codes are only applicable so long as they do not interfere with current requirements: even a historic building needs to be brought up to match current requirements when certain conditions are met. If you wish to install a new light fixture, and

have aluminum wiring, the existing wires must be copper-tailed in order to make it safe and legal. For historic copies of the By-Law, I would also suggest reaching out to 311, as they should know to whom you would need to make that request.

To clarify, it is not that there "must be a pit", I said that there was very likely a pit that was filled in by the previous homeowners, as that is what I have seen in other older homes where the meter is close to ground level. The rule is, and has been for at least the 18 years I have been with the City, that there must be one metre or three feet of clearance around the water meter. I am presuming that that pit was filled in after the meter was changed out in 1988, whether the basement was "finished" before then, or not, because I cannot imagine trying to change out your meter in its current position, nor are City techs famous for being patient with obviously incorrect meter installations. The homeowners at the time would have been instructed to raise the meter up, had it be in this condition at the time.

All of this is moot: the meter must be changed. It also cannot stay sitting on the ground. Whether it is raised up, or the pit is redug, the City does not perform work on private fixtures, nor does it pay to repair them or move them. The water meter and endpoint in your home belong to the City, and are hosted there as a requirement of the water service. The water service and the meter would have been installed by the builder in 1954, and passed inspection with the City: having the meter sitting on the ground would not have met the requirements to pass inspection, even in 1954.

All of this is why the wording is "provide access" is so prevalent in the By-Law. The City understands that what people do within their homes is - for the most part - beyond our control, nor do we want that kind of control. Permits exist to ensure work is done safely, and that updates which would change the homes value are tracked for tax purposes.

Have a great evening!

Elizabeth
Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04534

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 6:23:48 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Hello Elisabeth,
I guess I was not clear enough.

I am on CPP/OAS. There is NO way I can afford a plumber, or people to move the meter, etc.
I am 74 years old today, still mending from a broken hip. I certainly cannot be left with a nightmare to clean up, etc, as getting up and down the stairs is hard for me.

I still do not understand what is involved in Neptune's 'clearing' the area. Are they going to leave a huge pile of concrete for me to clean up? What exactly is involved in their clearing? Are they going to use jackhammers and the dust and debris will go everywhere in the house? How big a hole are they planning to dig? I need to know what I will be left with when they clear, install and leave.

I tried to find the by-law from 1988 that said the meter had to be left exposed by large hole in the floor, etc and can't find on the City website. If you have it, can you share a copy, please. They can write all the by-laws they wish, but they cannot ambush seniors. I will get more information as to when that concrete floor was installed, but I am pretty certain it was installed with the foundation in 1954.

Thank you for trying to help,
[REDACTED]

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - 2 [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

When I say clear out, I mean that if Neptune has offered to dig out the floor under and around your meter, it would be far cheaper to have them do it than to do it yourself or to hire someone. My - likely confounding - suggestion was to trim and pull out the wood flooring before they came so that it can be neatly reinstalled around the edges of the new pit, so that with the box on top you wouldn't even notice it. Apologies for the lack of clarity.

The City is not, nor can they be responsible for interior fixtures within the home, including the floor. Given the age of the home, odds are good the meter was installed over a pit, which was subsequently filled in order to finish the basement floor. This is quite common in older homes. The meter inspection upon the build happens before most of the interior is finished. Any changes after the meter inspection of a new building are beyond our scope. Regardless, per the by-law previously linked, the homeowner is responsible to ensure adequate spacing is provided so that maintenance and replacement of the meter and endpoint are possible. Grandfathered set-ups must still meet modern access needs.

Instead of allowing Neptune to dig out the small section of your flooring, you may prefer to hire a plumber to relocate the meter, per the specification sheet provided in my last email. This would entail raising the meter up 0.9m and out 0.5 meters from any walls. Currently, you are only being asked to expose the meter enough

for us to perform maintenance, however, if the meter is moved, it will need to be brought up to building code standard, significantly increasing its imposition on your space. Additionally a second - isolation - valve would need to be added to the other side of the water meter.

Having been caught by surprise by the electrical "engineering" in my home, I have a great deal of sympathy for your situation. Hopefully, we will be able to get this sorted with minimal cost and maximal speed so that it is no longer something to have to worry about.

I hope that was helpful!

Elizabeth

Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services

City of Ottawa

100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East

Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8

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REF#04534

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 5:06:37 PM
To: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

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Hello Elisabeth,

What exactly is meant by "As Neptune has offered to **clear out the section of floor which has been filled incorrectly** at no cost to you, it would be to your benefit to allow them to do so."

What does 'clear out' involve and what will be the consequence to me of their 'clearing out'.

You have made MANY presumptions about the installation of the original meter, but provide no evidence whatever. Your records should show if the basement had a dirt floor or concrete floor when the original meter was installed. I am almost positive that in 1988 it was a concrete floor that was present when the meter was installed, because when I did an appeal about the MPAC assessment value, how long it had a finished basement, came up.

You may not be deliberately trying to make life harder, but that is what is happening. The City, when it installed the original meters, should have anticipated that if not already in the basement, a concrete floor

was likely to be installed eventually and therefore the meter needed to be installed nice and high, just in case. From what I can see, even if was a dirt floor, the meter was installed far too low.

Please clarify the above for me,
Thank you,

From: WS-Billing / Facturation d'eau <WS-Billing@ottawa.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 12:29 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Neptune Meter Replacement - [REDACTED]

Hello [REDACTED]

I will attach the specifications sheet for requirements of clearance around the meter, and include a link to the water by-law (<https://ottawa.ca/en/living-ottawa/laws-licences-and-permits/laws/laws-z/water-law-no-2019-74>).

Your current meter was installed in 1988, replacing the previous iteration, and the floor was likely filled in and the basement finished by the previous owner sometime after this point. The meter would not have been installed in its current state, as it does not meet our requirements now, nor would it have done so then. The building code requires 1m of space around the water meter for access to repair and maintain it as shown in the attached specification sheet.

You - as the current owner - are responsible for the cost of making any modifications required to give appropriate access and space to the meter, whether that involves unearthing the meter from the floor, opening a wall, removing a cabinet, sink, or appliance blocking the meter (as per section 72.2 of the linked by-law). You are not the only homeowner who has been surprised by work required. Homeowners have found their meters walled into renovated bathrooms, behind water heaters, and even one in the ceiling. As Neptune has offered to clear out the section of floor which has been filled incorrectly at no cost to you, it would be to your benefit to allow them to do so.

Please remember, we are not trying to make your life harder. This work needs to be done, and should have been done shortly after you purchased the home, given the expected lifespan of the meter. While I recognize that you did not make the choices for the prior owners, as homeowners we occasionally have to deal with the consequences of the decisions of those who owned before us.

Once the meter is changed out, let me know and I will arrange to have an off-cycle bill issued, so that any overpayment can be credited as soon as possible.

Have a great day!

Elizabeth
Water Billing, Finance and Corporate Services
City of Ottawa
100 Constellation Drive, 4th Floor East
Ottawa ON, K2G 6J8