VILLAGE OF GLENWOOD

Council Briefing Note

Residential Utility Disconnection & Reconnection — Current Policy Summary

Prepared by: CAO Jim Brown | Purpose: Support Council debate on seasonal shut-offs and cost recovery

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Bottom line: Under the Municipal Utility Bylaw 242-2021, a property owner may voluntarily shut off water for a period — e.g. a whole winter when away — with only two days' notice and a small fee, and pays no water, sewer, or solid-waste charges while off (s.5.9, s.10.7). Because rates must cover the fixed cost of operating the systems (s.2.3), seasonal shut-offs shift that fixed-cost recovery onto year-round ratepayers. This is the central question for Council.

1. What the Village Controls

- **Village-operated:** water, sanitary sewer, and seasonal irrigation (mid-May–Sept 30). Only the Village operates curb stops / turns water on or off (s.8.4).
- **Not the Village:** electricity (FortisAlberta) and natural gas (ATCO Gas). Any policy Council sets applies to the water service.

2. Voluntary / Seasonal Shut-offs

- **How it works (s.5.9):** an owner who vacates or wishes to discontinue use pays the disconnection fee, gives two days' notice, and water and sewer charges stop. There is **no minimum period, no limit on frequency, and no test of genuine vacancy** in the bylaw.
- **While shut off (s.10.7):** the property is not billed for water, sewer, or solid waste (it is still billed irrigation, but irrigation runs only mid-May–Sept 30, so a winter shut-off avoids everything). Billing is not prorated (s.5.10).
- **Reconnection (s.3.6):** a fee may be charged whenever water is turned off or reconnected — so a seasonal round-trip attracts a fee in each direction.
- **A lever Council already has (s.3.4):** Council "may refuse to change any existing services at any time for any reason it considers sufficient."

Illustration — a six-month winter shut-off (Nov–Apr)	Amount
Monthly charges avoided: water $57.50 + sewer $20.00 + solid waste $10.00	$87.50 / mo
Charges avoided over the season (6 months, no proration — s.5.10)	~ $525
Fees to shut off + reconnect (customer request, $30 each — Bylaw 245-2026)	$60
Net saving to the ratepayer for the season	**~ $465**

Both sides: seasonal shut-off is a legitimate way for absent owners to cut cost and reduce winter freeze/burst risk; it is also a way to avoid contributing to fixed system costs while retaining the right to reconnect. The bylaw does not currently distinguish the two.

3. Disconnection for Non-Payment

- In-Village residents are ***not*** disconnected for arrears. Unpaid charges accrue a 2%/month (24%/yr) penalty (s.5.5, Sch. A) and are transferred to the property tax roll each February, then collected as tax arrears (s.5.6, s.5.11).
- Only Rural Accounts (outside Village limits) delinquent over four months are served notice and disconnected two weeks later if unpaid (s.5.6).

4. Fees — Bylaw 245-2026, Schedule A

- Customer-requested shut-off / reconnect: **$30** each. Village-initiated (any reason / non-payment): **$100**. Emergency-related: **waived**. (The "any reason $100" vs "customer request $30" wording could be read either way — worth clarifying.)

5. Questions for Council to Consider

- Should a fixed "base" or "availability" charge apply even while a service is shut off, so infrastructure costs are recovered from every connected lot regardless of use?
- Should voluntary shut-offs have a minimum duration, a frequency limit, or a higher reconnection fee to discourage churn — while still allowing genuine seasonal vacancy?
- Should the s.3.4 discretion to refuse a service change be used, and under what written criteria?
- Any change to fees belongs in Bylaw 245-2026; any change to the process (s.5.9, s.10.7) requires amending Bylaw 242-2021 (three readings).

Sources: Municipal Utility Bylaw 242-2021, ss. 2.3, 3.4, 3.6, 5.5, 5.6, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 8.4, 10.7 & Schedule A; Rates, Fees & Charges Bylaw 245-2026, Schedule A; Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000 c. M-26.