

Water Service Turn-On / Turn-Off Policy & Seasonal (Winter) Opt-Out Options

Meeting: Regular Council – September 9, 2026 **Re:** Bylaws 242-2021 (Municipal Utility) & 245-2026 (Rates, Fees & Charges)

1. Current Glenwood Policy

- Water service is governed by the **Municipal Utility Bylaw 242-2021**; the turn-on/turn-off fee is set in the **Rates, Fees & Charges Bylaw 245-2026** (Schedule A).
- Practice: to shut water off, the resident calls the Village office; Village staff operate the curb-stop valve. Same process to turn back on.
- Current fee: **\$30 to turn water on/off** (as provided). There is no formal seasonal “opt-out” program in the bylaw at present.

2. Do Other Communities Allow a Winter Opt-Out?

Seasonal / temporary disconnection is a recognized service in Alberta, but a true “pay nothing all winter” opt-out is uncommon. Two patterns dominate:

- Charge a per-event turn-off + turn-on fee (often higher in winter); and/or
- Keep charging a base / standby charge to recover fixed infrastructure costs while service is off.
- **Village of Big Valley (Bylaw 848):** turn-on/turn-off \$35 each in summer, \$70 each in winter — a seasonal fee that discourages winter shut-offs.
- **City of Calgary:** allows seasonal disconnection of an exterior irrigation meter (billing paused); for full service, fixed treatment, wastewater & stormwater charges continue even when off.
- **Provincial (UCA) guidance for gas/electric:** seasonal shut-off is available, but “idle billing” recovers fixed costs and reconnection fees apply.

3. Pros & Cons of a Formal Winter Opt-Out

Pros	Cons
• Savings/fairness for snowbirds & vacant homes. • Less winter consumption/leak risk on empty lots. • Customer-service goodwill.	• Fixed costs (wells, treatment plant, mains) don’t drop — lost revenue shifts onto remaining ratepayers unless a base charge continues. • Freezing risk: un-drained lines can damage curb stops/laterals; needs proper winterization. • Extra staff time / admin on a small (~120-home) system with a 2-day office week.

4. Is the \$30 Fee Comparable?

- \$30 sits at the low-to-moderate end for Alberta. Benchmarks: Big Valley \$35 summer / \$70 winter (each); Barrhead ~\$25+GST admin; St. Albert reconnection \$75 (business hrs)/\$115 (after hrs); Calgary reconnection \$135–\$250.
- If \$30 is *per event*, it is reasonable and slightly below small-village norms. If \$30 covers *both* the off and the on, it likely under-recovers staff time.
- Options to consider: (a) a summer/winter differential like Big Valley; (b) a continuing base/standby charge during any opt-out; (c) set the fee to recover actual staff time.

Options for Council

- 1. Status quo – keep informal turn-off on request at \$30.
- 2. Formal winter opt-out with a continuing base charge + turn-on/off fees (amend both 242-2021 and 245-2026).
- 3. Seasonal fee differential only (higher winter turn-on/off), no formal opt-out.