

VAID Meter Project – Community Update (June 2026)

Community Meeting: June 25, 2026 – 4:00 PM, Royal Canadian Legion, Van Anda

The Van Anda Improvement District (VAID) is holding a community meeting on **June 25 at 4:00 PM** at the Legion to provide an update on the Meter Project, future billing options, and how residents will access their personal water-use data. This report summarizes the information that will be presented and is being shared in advance so residents can review the key points.

1. Project Status

The Meter Project is nearing completion. As meters come online, they are already providing valuable information about water-use patterns, leaks, and system performance. This data is essential for planning future budgets, improving system reliability, and developing a fair and sustainable rate structure.

2. Water Rates Are Not Yet Determined

A common question is: **“What will my bill be once meters are active?”**

At this stage, **no rate amounts have been set** because metered rates depend on several factors that are **not yet knowable**, including:

- the annual operating budget for the year metered billing begins
- the actual amount of water used by the community
- the volume of water lost to system leakage
- the volume of water lost on private property

Until all meters are installed and producing consistent data, VAID cannot accurately calculate the base rate, consumption rate, or the proportion of fixed vs. variable charges.

The current residential metered rates in the Tolls & Taxes Bylaw were created for different circumstances and should not be used as an estimate of what future water bills will be under the new metered system.

A note about Parcel Tax:

The June 25 meeting will focus on **water rates only**. Parcel Tax is **not part of this discussion**.

Parcel Tax has always been — and will continue to be — **a separate annual charge** that funds VAID’s **infrastructure and capital works**. It is not tied to water use and is not affected by the Meter Project.

Water tolls, by contrast, are **user charges** that fund the **operation and administration** of the water system and apply only to properties receiving water service.

Nothing about Parcel Tax is changing. It will continue to be **invoiced annually**, separate from water tolls.

3. Customer Access to Water-Use Data (My360 Portal)

Residents will be able to access their personal water-use data through the **My360 customer portal**.

Key points:

- The portal requires an annual subscription that covers the entire system. The cost applies to the community as a whole and does not vary based on how many individual residents choose to use it. The first year is fully covered by the grant.
- Access will begin once all meters are installed and uploaded, with an estimated start date of **August 2026**.
- After the first year, continuing the subscription becomes an **ongoing budget decision** for VAID. The current estimated cost is **\$5,365 per year**.
- Even if VAID does not continue the subscription, **residents will always be able to obtain their water-use data directly from the office**.
- The portal works on **computers, phones, and tablets**.

4. What We Are Learning From the Meters

Even before full implementation, the meters have already identified important trends.

a) Leaks on private property

Several properties have been found with significant leaks, including some as high as **24 m³ per day (over 6,300 USG)**.

Causes include:

- underground service line failures
- faulty irrigation systems
- automatic watering systems left running

These leaks explain the sudden spikes in water use that often appear in early summer.

The very high consumption observed in early June was reduced by half after the four highest-using properties were notified. In addition, many smaller leaks have been identified, and property owners are being notified as data becomes available.

b) System-wide consumption is decreasing

As leaks are identified and repaired, **overall water consumption has dropped**, which benefits the entire community by:

- reducing treatment costs
- lowering wear on infrastructure
- improving long-term water security

c) System leakage vs. private leakage is still unknown

We will not know how much water is lost through:

- VAID's distribution system (mainline leaks), versus private property leaks

...until **all meters are online** and we can compare total water produced to total water metered.

This comparison is essential for determining:

- the base rate needed to cover unavoidable system losses
- the consumption rate for individual use
- long-term capital planning

5. Why Metering Matters

Meters help VAID:

- detect leaks early
- reduce wasted water
- improve fairness (pay for what you use)
- plan capital upgrades
- control long-term costs

Meters help residents:

- monitor their own use
- detect leaks on their property
- avoid unexpected high bills
- make informed choices about water use
- set alerts and notifications

More information is available on our website vananda-id.ca:

- Meter Pilot Project
 - Metering Concerns
 - Meter FAQ
 - Previous Community Meeting Summaries
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6. Before Billing Begins: One Full Year of Mock Billing

To ensure fairness and transparency, VAID will conduct one full year of mock billing before real metered billing begins. During 2027, residents will receive their regular annual bill as usual, while also receiving mock bills throughout the year based on metered usage. Full implementation of metered billing will begin in 2028.

What mock billing means:

- Residents will receive sample bills showing what their charges *would* have been under the proposed rate structure.
- **No money is owed** from the mock bill
- Residents can understand their usage patterns and adjust behaviour if needed.
- VAID can test the billing system, confirm data accuracy, and refine the rate model.

Mock billing ensures that when real billing begins, both residents and VAID have a full year of real-world data and no surprises.

7. Future Billing Structure (Based on CoP Meeting With Experts)

VAID recently participated in a **Community of Practice (CoP) meeting** with experienced water-system operators and rate-setting experts. That session helped clarify the main components of a metered billing model.

a) Fixed vs. variable charges

A portion of the bill must be **fixed** to ensure stable revenue for:

- system maintenance
- treatment
- unavoidable system leakage
- emergency repairs

A second portion will be based on **actual water use**.

b) Tiered rates

Tiered rates (higher rates for higher consumption) were discussed with the experts, but **VAID will not introduce tiered rates at the start.**

Tiering may be considered in future years once we have:

- full consumption data
- a clear understanding of system leakage
- a stable baseline budget

8. Billing Frequency: Quarterly vs. Annual

Leak Detection Does Not Depend on Billing

Residents will be able to see their water use online, and VAID will receive alerts for abnormal consumption. This means leak detection is **not** tied to billing frequency.

Billing frequency affects:

- how often residents see the financial impact
- how predictable bills are
- how much administrative work and cost VAID must manage
- how stable VAID's revenue is

Quarterly Billing – Pros

- More “real” for residents who do not use the online portal
- Smaller, predictable bills
- Supports behaviour change
- Aligns with metered systems

Quarterly Billing – Cons

- Higher administrative workload (4× the work)
- Higher administrative cost (more invoice runs, postage, software use)
- More frequent arrears tracking

Annual Billing – Pros

- Lowest administrative cost
- Least staff time required
- Simplest for VAID's accounting

Annual Billing – Cons

- Harder for residents (large annual bill)
- Less immediate financial feedback
- Cash-flow challenges for VAID

9. Hybrid Option: Annual Base Rate + Quarterly Consumption Billing

How it works

- Base rate billed annually
- Consumption billed quarterly

Why it works

- Stable revenue for VAID
- Manageable bills for residents
- Quarterly consumption still provides timely feedback
- Balanced administrative workload

This is a common model in small water systems.

10. Administrative Cost Considerations

Billing requires:

- pulling meter data
- validating anomalies
- generating invoices
- processing payments
- tracking arrears
- responding to billing questions

Moving from annual to quarterly billing would multiply these activities fourfold, resulting in a significant increase in administrative workload and associated costs.

In addition to staff time, material costs (printing, postage, and supplies) would also increase proportionally with billing frequency.

Additional software could be implemented to help automate billing and reduce manual workload; however, for a system of this size, the cost of acquiring and maintaining such software may not be cost-effective and could offset any administrative savings.

While annual billing reduces the number of billing cycles and keeps administrative costs lower, it can result in larger balances owing and more challenging arrears management.

11. Billing frequency does not affect leak detection.

Residents will have online access to their usage, and VAID will receive alerts for abnormal consumption.

No billing model will be chosen until:

- all meters are online
 - system leakage is known
 - the annual budget for the first metered year is finalized
 - the mock billing year is complete
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12. Join Us on June 25

We encourage all residents to attend the meeting to learn more, ask questions, and understand how the Meter Project will support the long-term sustainability of our water system.

Date: June 25, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Royal Canadian Legion, Van Anda