



Corporation of the Township of Brock

Staff Report to the Mayor and Members of Council

From: Trena DeBruijn
Position: Director of Finance/Treasurer
Title / Subject: 2024 Tariff of Fees
Date of Report: November 12, 2023
Date of Meeting: November 27, 2023
Report No: 2023-FI-025

1.0 Issue / Origin

This report addresses recommendations for additions/amendments brought forward to Council for approval as part of our annual review of the Township's Tariff of Fees By-law.

2.0 Background

As part of the Township's annual budget cycle, staff review the schedule of user fee charges to ensure that the fees are rationalized and justifiable. Any new and potential fee increases to the Tariff of Fees By-law would be incorporated into the upcoming budget. Once approved, the Tariff of Fees becomes effective for services to be rendered from January 1, 2024 or dates as set out in the by-law.

3.0 Analysis

As part of the review of the Fees & Charges By-Law, staff have reviewed the departmental fees in line with costs of providing the services and have reviewed against neighbouring municipalities.

In many instances, the Township's fees and charges have not been updated in several years and have not kept up with the costs of providing services.

Unless specifically identified, most of the charges have been updated for 2024, for inflation of 3.6% (rounded to the nearest dollar). This is based upon the 2023 CIP and Inflation Rates for Ontario, as released by Statistics Canada, for September 2023.

As staff costs increase as well as supplies and materials, it is important that our fees and charges, which assist in offsetting these costs, are increased as well for inflation. If our fees and charges do not keep up with inflation then the costs of providing specific services are being subsidized by the tax base and passed onto all taxpayers in the Township, whether or not they utilize the services (rather than the specific individuals who are benefitting from the services being requested).

The following comments provide an overview of the Tariff of Fees Updates proposed for 2024 that are either new or have been adjusted from the 2023 rates:

Schedule B – Finance Department

After discussions with staff and reviewing the fees and charges by-laws of other neighbouring municipalities, a number of new fees and charges are being proposed for 2024 as follows;

- Duplicate billing request for more than one owner – There will be no charge for this service IF the property owners are enrolled in e-send, however, if staff is required to prepare additional billings and mail them to multiple property owners, we propose a fee of \$11 for this service, to help offset additional staff time in preparing, printing and mailing additional bills.
- Request to refund payments for tax certificates– Staff are regularly asked by property owners (lawyers) to prepare tax certificate. These take time to prepare and review and when the request is subsequently cancelled, the exercise ends up being a waste of staff resources. According, staff would like to propose a fee of \$21 for cancellation if the work has been performed before the cancellation request is received.
- If a property goes for tax sale, all information of the sale is advertised for interested parties. Often, staff are asked to provide either paper copies of the property sale information or by email. As this information is available through other sources, staff propose a fee of \$26 to provide this service which helps to offset the staff costs related to the request.

- When a property goes for tax sale, municipalities are required to issue both first and final notices. These do take staff time to prepare as well as mailing or courier expenses. Accordingly, staff recommend a fee of \$26 to assist with offsetting the staff and mailing costs.
- Sending tax arrears and reminder notices consume staff time to prepare, review as well as mailing costs. Other neighbouring municipalities charge for this service and staff propose a fee of \$6 to assist with offsetting Township costs.
- Staff prepare accounts receivable invoices for billing purposes and mail to our clients. If we are asked to re-create the billings or re-print a statement of account, this requires additional staff time to perform the task already completed once before. In addition, there are additional mailing costs involved. Assuming there was no error by the Township in issuing the initial invoice, staff propose a fee of \$26 for re-printing and issuing invoices and statements of account.
- There are additional costs involved in preparing and mailing tax bills, statements, etc., to out of Country addresses. Staff routinely recommend individuals requiring this to enrol in e-send, however, should the tax payer not want to receive their mailing in this fashion and would like a paper copy, staff propose a fee of \$11 for this service.
- The Township routinely takes Letters of Credit for development related matters. When these letters of credit are modified and/or reduced (or cancelled), staff are required to investigate internally to ensure there are no outstanding invoices or issues related to the development, prepare letters to the bank and to the client. This consumes staff time as well as mailing cost. Staff propose a new fee of \$70 per hour for these services.

Schedule D – Public Works Department – Parks and Recreation

Ice Rental Rates

The contracts for 2023/2024 have been prepared and issued to users for the season, therefore, there are no proposed increases for users until September 1, 2024.

Staff have reviewed other neighbouring user rates for ice rentals and note that our fees are low in comparison with others. Accordingly, staff propose a 3.5% increase for September 1, 2024 (excluding adult prime time), and that fees be reviewed and increased annually until in line with other neighbouring municipalities. Staff are proposing to increase gradually as to give the user groups time to adjust and prepare for annual increases.

For adult prime time, staff have proposed to increase the fees to \$160 per hour, in line with the lowest rate being charged currently by one of our neighbouring municipalities. Staff had initially considered a more aggressive approach to increases for ice rental (considering the average expense recovery for all three arenas, in total is approximately 30%), for 2024, however, given that there is a possibility of a facility being closed in 2024 for a period of time, we would like to await the outcome of the Sunderland Renovation and Expansion before doing a fulsome fee study. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, while still in draft, is recommending that a master plan be developed in regards to a fee strategy and staff feel this would align well for 2025/2026, once the arenas are fully operational.

In addition, staff are proposing a fee of \$20 per booking, per affected building if a booking is cancelled by the renter (if cancelled by the Township, there would be no charge). Staff time is involved in both booking and invoicing the facility and when cancelled, the booking and invoice needs to be cancelled and no revenue is earned from the lost booking (and often, the cancellation is done late and there is no time to try and re-book the facility for another event).

Summer Ice Surface Rentals

Staff have reviewed the fees for summer surface ice rentals in line with other neighbouring municipalities and propose a number of changes and fee increases.

- The daily rental for summer surface ice events, that include alcohol, is proposed to be increased from \$592 to \$651 (in line with neighbouring municipal rental fees for similar facilities). In addition, it is proposed that this rate would apply for rentals up to 12 hours maximum.

- The daily rate for summer surface ice events, that do not include alcohol, is proposed to be increased from \$319 to \$351, for a 12 hour maximum, in line with neighbouring municipal rental fees for similar facilities).
- A refundable damage deposit of \$300 is proposed for any summer surface ice rental. This will be returned if there are no issues or damage resulting from the rental.
- A cancellation fee of \$20 per booking, per affected building is proposed.

Auditorium Rental Rates

Staff have reviewed other neighbouring user rates for auditorium rentals and noted that our fees are a little low in comparison with others. Accordingly, staff are proposing a 3.6% increase in rental rates for the auditorium for 2024.

The room rental daily rate is proposed to be a maximum of 12 hours and there is an additional fee for use of the auditorium rental combined with ice rental.

With room rentals, the Township always ensures that staff are present, therefore, the rates for calling staff in with room rental can be removed from the fees and charges schedule. In addition, the Township has not been asked in several years to hold a blood donor clinic in the auditorium, therefore, staff are recommending that the fee be removed from the fees and charges schedule for 2024.

Manilla & Wilfrid Town Hall

The room rental fees for both Manilla and Wilfrid Town Halls are very low and are currently not even covering the costs of cleaning and maintenance. A 10% increase is suggested to assist with the ongoing costs for cleaning, maintenance, etc.

In addition, it is suggested that the minimum rental be for 2 hours as we are charged a set cleaning fee and the daily maximum be 8 hours.

The cancellation fee for the Manilla and Wilfrid Town Halls is proposed to be \$10 per booking and per facility affected by the cancellation, which is lower than the cancellation fee proposed in the other facilities as the rental rate for these halls is significantly less.

Field Users

In discussions with user groups, conversations were held around how best to bill for field usage and it was decided jointly that a per player, per season rate would be best.

In the past, it has been a challenge to gather information from user groups on the dates fields were used or the number of participants, therefore, the approved rates were often not appropriately charged or collected.

Based on this, staff are proposing a per player rate (per season) of \$10 be implemented for January 2024. This is a start for 2024 and the Township will not be making any changes to the services provided for field users for this year.

Staff will be preparing a report in 2024 that will provide the costs of maintenance to operate the fields and at that time, will make recommendations on more appropriate fees to be recovered for 2025.

Harbour Launch Fees

The daily, seasonal and 3 day pass rates are proposed to be increased for 2024, in line with what neighbouring municipalities are charging for this service.

Daily rate will increase from \$15 to \$17.70 (or \$20 with HST), the season pass from \$118 to \$133 and 3 day pass from \$36 to \$45.

Day Camp

Two new rates for day camp are being proposed for 2024.

A short week day camp (for 4 day weeks due to statutory holidays) is being proposed for 2024, at the rate of \$130.

In addition, a specialty camp fee of \$180 is being proposed for 2024.

The day camp rate has been increased to \$160 per week and will include one trip with each camp (not including short weeks due to statutory holidays). As the cost of entrance fees and transportation are increasing, the costs and locations of the day trips will be closely monitored and will likely be modified to include trips with limits as follows:

- Entrance fee per child and councillor to approximately \$20 - \$25
- Transportation limit to with 50 to 75km from Cannington

A fee for cancellation of before or after care is being proposed at the rate of \$10. Staff time is required to book and invoice these sessions and if cancelled, there is more staff time involved to revise invoices and/or potentially changing staffing schedule requirements.

Other Services

Staff are proposing to add fitness classes for 2024, at a fee of \$7.08 per class, if registered in advance.

The drop in cost (without pre-registration) is proposed to be approximately \$10 per class.

There is also Township led sports programming at the local schools which typically run on a 10-12 week session. The rate for this is being proposed at \$32 per participant per session.

Fire Department

The occurrence report fee was set at \$134 in 2023, however, the staff time involved in compiling these reports is just as great or longer than the time to prepare compliance letters, therefore, staff are proposing an increase to match the compliance letter fee.

Animal Services

As the costs of maintaining animals in our shelters is increasing as both food and veterinary care expenses increase, we are proposing increases as follows:

- Adoption - Dog - \$165 to \$200
- Adoption – Puppies - \$114 to \$125
- Adoption – Cat - \$92 to \$125
- Adoption – Kittens - \$73 to \$75
- Cat/Dog First Impoundment - \$60 to \$65
- Cat/Dog Second Impoundment - \$137 to \$145
- Cat/Dog Third Impoundment - \$228 to \$235
- Cat/Dog Subsequent Impoundment - \$456 to \$465
- Cat/Dog Impoundment Maintenance Fee per day - \$14 to \$20
- Surrender Fee – Dog - \$78 to \$150
- Surrender Fee – Cat - \$42 to \$75
- Surrender Fee – Cat & litter of kittens - \$103 to \$125

Development Services

The development services department has completed a review of the site alteration and fill permit fees, along with the fees for swimming pools and fence enclosures. These fees have been included in the Tariff of Fees by-law for 2024 and will be reviewed annually.

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

N/A

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

The new fees and charges proposed will be incorporated into the 2024 budget.

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

N/A

7.0 Communications

The new Tariff of Fees by-law will be placed on our website and advertised.

8.0 Conclusion

This report provides recommendations for Council consideration in regards to proposed changes to the tariff of Fees By-Law for 2024.

9.0 Recommendation

That this resolution be brought forward for approval to the Council meeting on November 27, 2023.

Attachment : Tariff of Fees By-Law for 2024