



# Staff Report

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## Finance

**Report To:** COW\_Finance\_Admin\_Fire\_Community\_Services  
**Meeting Date:** March 18, 2024  
**Report Number:** FAF.24.022  
**Title:** Proposed Amendments to the Fees and Charges By-law, Solid Waste Management Fees By-law, and Water and Sewer Charges By-law – Public Comments  
**Prepared by:** Sam Dinsmore, Acting Director of Finance / Treasurer

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.24.022, entitled “Proposed Amendments to the Fees and Charges By-law, Solid Waste Management Fees By-law, and Water and Sewer Charges By-law” for information purposes.

### B. Overview

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This report outlines the comments from the Public Meeting for the proposed amendments to the Fees and Charges By-law, Solid Waste Management Fees By-law, and Water and Sewer Charges By-law, as well as Staff’s response to these comments.

### C. Background

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The proposed amendments to the Fees and Charges By-law, Solid Waste Management Fees By-law, and Water and Sewer Charges By-law were reviewed as part of the 2024 Draft Budget. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Town held a Public Meeting to provide the public with the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendments to the Fees and Charges By-law, Solid Waste Management Fees By-law, and Water and Sewer Charges By-law.

The 2024 budget process and document included the Fees and Charges for each Department. The draft By-laws were advertised as per the Town’s notice policy and included on the Town’s website.

Staff are proposing that these By-laws be presented for Council’s consideration at the April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 Council Meeting.

The Town received four written comments up to 12:00pm March 8, 2024, in advance of the Public Meeting (Attachment 1), zero after the deadline prior to the Public Meeting and one at the Public Meeting. Below is a summary of the comments received from the public.

## **D. Analysis**

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The following comments have been received.

### Paul and Nancy Clements

Paul and Nancy Clements provided comments on the user fees for Town facilities. User fees for all facilities increased in the last budget, however the rates for the Hall Rental at Beavery Valley Community Centre where they play pickleball went up substantially higher than any other user group. Paul and Nancy Clements are asking that in this year's budget, the increase be more moderate and are requesting to continue to receive the subsidy.

Staff Response – the fees at the Beaver Valley Community Centre were increased by 3% which is in line with the other increases made to Town fees and charges. Previously the Town didn't have pickleball courts on the arena floor during the off-ice season however that is now an available service, staff include a fee for the first time for this in the 2024 budget.

The subsidy for pickleball has been included in the 2024 fees and charges by-laws at the same rate as it was in 2023.

### Kait Murray, Executive Director, Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce

Kait Murray was requested to support one of the Chamber members in objecting to increases in the cost of using the Tomahawk Sports Facilities that are included in the proposed 2024 budget.

Staff Response – the greens fees and season passes at Tomahawk were not changed from 2023 to 2024. A few fees were added, such as the pull-cart rentals, as new services are brought in at this facility.

### Andrew Robertson, Mixed Movements

Mr. Robertson provided comments on the Fees and Charges to request the Town continue their 2023 "All Parks (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of \$55 per day, for the 2024 season.

The 2024 draft budget proposes a change to the "All Parks (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of \$27.50 per hour. This change will increase Mr. Robertson's rental cost by as much as 400% year over year, based on an average 8 hour summer camp day.

I have spoken with both Terry Green (Manager of Park and Trails) & Ryan Gibbons (Director of Community Services). Who confirmed with myself, they would agree to keeping the 2023 "All Park (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of \$55 per day, for the 2024 season.

Staff Response – this fee was converted to a per hour fee for commercial/for-profit organizations at the request of another commercial operators. At Council’s direction the Town could carry both the per hour cost (\$27.50) and a full day charge (\$55) through 2024 staff will review these charges to ensure they are sufficient.

#### Paul Wilson

Mr. Wilson provided comments on the Fees and Charges RE: waste water disposal fees and indicated that the significant increase in the fee is burdensome. Mr. Wilson is urging council and staff to look in to the matter and consider lowering the fee applied to holding tanks back down to an affordable level.

In addition Mr. Wilson spoke at the public meeting regarding this fee. Has a holding tank that requires pump outs. Increase is \$200 per pump out which equates to \$1,000 per year. Used to be a holding tank versus septic tank charge why did the Town unify the charges?

Staff Response – the septage waste fee was increased by 3% as per the Town’s practice in matching fee increases to cost of living increases. Prior to 2023 the Town did have two charges one for holding tanks and one for septic systems however through the 2023 budget this was changed for the following reasons:

- The cost to pump and treat holding tank waste is the same as septage
- The Town considered billing rates of other municipalities and this structure is similar to what is done at neighbouring municipalities.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

### **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

### **3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

### **4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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N/A

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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The fees and charges collected by the Town for various services helps to offset the required costs but back onto the taxpayer through annual property taxes.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Allison Kershaw, Manager of Water and Wastewater Services

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting which took place on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Those who provided comments at the Public Meeting, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, has been provided notice of this Staff Report.

Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Sam Dinsmore, Acting Director of Finance / Treasurer [directorfit@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:directorfit@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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### **1. Public Comments**

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Dinsmore  
Acting Director of Finance / Treasurer

For more information, please contact:  
Sam Dinsmore, Acting Director of Finance / Treasurer  
[directorfit@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:directorfit@thebluemountains.ca)  
519-599-3131 extension 274



### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	FAF.24.022 Proposed Amendments to Fees and Charges By-laws Public Comments.docx
Attachments:	- FAF.24.022 Attachment 1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 14, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Sam Dinsmore - Mar 13, 2024 - 9:30 AM**

**Shawn Everitt - Mar 14, 2024 - 3:19 PM**

December 14, 2023

Councillor Hope

I am sending you this letter which I am asking you to share with the Mayor and your fellow Councillors at your December 18 meeting. It concerns two key issues that are currently under discussion at TBM.

The first issue concerns the current budget discussions and user fees for Town facilities. As you know I am the President of The Thornbury Pickleball Club (TPC) and a member of numerous other pickleball groups. In the last budget, user fees for all facilities increased, however the rates for the Hall rental at BVCC where we play pickleball went up substantially higher than any other user group. We did retain our subsidy for which we are thankful. I am asking that in this year's budget, the increase be more moderate and we continue to receive the subsidy. TPC is a community club. Our program provides our members physical exercise and for many, valuable social interaction. We were able to absorb the increase this year but would hate to see any members leave if we have to increase fees a similar amount again.

The second issue concerns Events For Life (EFL) and their search for land to build their facility. My wife and I are financial supporters of and active volunteers with EFL. We attended the last meeting where the Cameron St. property was presented as a site that suits their needs. I have also been involved in discussions with the Town for new recreational facilities, primarily the need for indoor courts and more specifically pickleball courts. The need for them is high as all groups have lengthy waitlists for people to join. However if Town staff and EFL concluded this site was a good fit, then in our opinion this trumps the use of this site for anything else but EFL. We understand Council must do their due diligence but time is of the essence. EFL, the staff, the volunteers and the participants are an asset to the community. The participants are the most inclusive, compassionate, polite and caring group we have known. We are proud to be associated with them. If we can provide anything further to assist Council in coming to the same conclusion presented in the original proposal by all means reach out to us. Regards.

Paul and Nancy Clements



**Allan Gibbons (He/Him)**

Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Town of The Blue Mountains, 32 Mill Street, P.O. Box 310, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

Tel: 519-599-3131 ext. 266 | Fax: 519-599-7723

Email: [agibbons@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:agibbons@thebluemountains.ca) | Website: [www.thebluemountains.ca](http://www.thebluemountains.ca)

As part of providing accessible customer service, please let me know if you have any accommodation needs or require communication supports or alternate formats.

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**From:** Blue Mountains Chamber [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Thursday, December 21, 2023 11:20 AM

**To:** Allan Gibbons <[agibbons@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:agibbons@thebluemountains.ca)>; Tim Hendry <[thendry@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:thendry@thebluemountains.ca)>

**Subject:** Public Input to TBM Proposed 2024 Budget

Hi Tim and Allan,

One of the Chamber's members has asked us to support them in objecting to increases in the cost of using the Tomahawk sports facilities that are included in the proposed 2024 budget. If I'm understanding the Town website correctly, Council will hold a series of special budget meetings in early January, and will release a revised draft of the budget on February 7, after which the process will open up for input from the public.

I just wanted to confirm that, if the Board decides to get involved, comments from the Chamber can be made after Feb 7? Or can we provide input before then?

Thanks for your help, and happy holidays!

Kait

Kait Murray  
Executive Director  
Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce







Andrew Robertson

Mixed Movements

Town of The Blue Mountains  
Attn: Town Clerk  
32 Mill Street  
P.O. Box 310  
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

Re: 2024 Draft Budget

Dear Members of Council;

I am writing to request the Town continue their 2023 "All Parks (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of **\$55** per day, for the 2024 season.

Mixed Movements specializes in delivering supervised active camp experiences. Providing youth of all ages, with life long and fundamental movement skill development, throughout the Town of the Blue Mountains.

During the months of July & August. Our certified NCCP coaches work with athletes to learn, develop and refine their skills. In a range of activities including biking, swimming, and kayaking.

Over the past 4 years the Town parks have provided a great space for us to gather, teach and enjoy these amazing activities throughout the summer season with our coaches and campers.

The 2024 draft budget proposes a change to the "All Parks (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of **\$27.50** per hour. This change will increase our rental cost by as much as **400%** year over year, based on an average 8 hour summer camp day.

I have spoken with both Terry Green (Manager of Park and Trails) & Ryan Gibbons (Director of Community Services). Who confirmed with myself, they would agree to keeping the 2023 "All Park (Commercial / For Profit) fee" of **\$55** per day, for the 2024 season.

I would like to thank the town in advance for taking the time to consider our request.

Sincerely



Andrew Robertson  
Co - Owner  
Mixed Movements

To the Council and Staff of the TBM:

Re: Increase in waste water disposal fees

My wife and I live in Heathcote which, as you know, is beyond the reach of the TBM's municipal water and sewage system, though our taxes certainly help to sustain that system for those who do enjoy it. Instead, we draw water from a well and, since we are too close to the Beaver River to permit a septic system, our waste water goes into a holding tank that needs a pump-out several times a year. That service is provided by Ardiel Septic Services.

Last year, Mr. Ardiel informed us that the disposal fee charged by the TBM Waste Water Treatment Plant had been increased from \$4.35 per cubic meter to \$17.22. That's a jump of almost 400%. I think you'll agree that is somewhat above the rate of inflation. I should point out that Ardiel has not increased his pumping fee, but we are now suddenly faced with a bill that is almost \$200.00 more per pump-out, due entirely to this arbitrary increase in the disposal fee. I'm sure we're not alone in having to meet this increase.

Mr. Ardiel was not offered any explanation for the drastic increase in those fees, so I'm hoping the council or staff can explain why they thought the increase was necessary, or whether they even considered the impact it might have on townsfolk like us. Like almost everyone on a fixed income, my wife and I have already been hit hard by the sudden rise in the cost of groceries, gas, heating, and interest rates. The 400% increase in the waste disposal fee has simply added an extra burden.

I would respectfully urge the council and staff to look into the matter and seriously consider bringing the disposal fee applied to holding tanks back down to a level we can afford.

Sincerely,

Paul Wilson  
Heathcote  
March 6, 2024