



Staff Report

Community Services – By-law Enforcement

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: April 13, 2026
Report Number: CS.26.019
Title: Follow-Up to Docupet Software Implementation
Prepared by: Debbie Young, Manager of By-law and Licensing

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CS.26.019, entitled “Follow-Up to Docupet Software Implementation for information only”.

B. Overview

Staff brought a report to Committee of the Whole on February 2, 2026, introducing Docupet, a new software platform, to replace the Town’s manual dog licensing process. This report provides additional information in relation to the Docupet software.

C. Background

At the February 17, 2026, Council meeting, Council directed staff as follows:

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains received for information the February 7, 2026, correspondence from Debbie Crosskill, Resident, regarding a Request for Reconsideration Vote regarding Municipal Dog Licensing;

AND THAT Council direct staff to provide a staff report that responds to the questions posed in Ms. Crosskill’s February 7, 2026, correspondence.

The majority of the questions posed in Ms. Crosskill’s correspondence were previously answered in [Staff Report CS.26.001](#). However, staff will outline each question and provide a detailed response below.

D. Analysis

Ms. Crosskill’s questions in her February 7, 2026, email were as follows:

1. There was no data regarding the number of hours that this would save staff by using Docupet.

Response:

Staff time/hours saved

Staff Report CS.26.001 (Committee of the Whole – February 2, 2026) advised that the former manual dog licensing process required approximately 50 hours of staff time, and that staff time is now estimated at approximately 1–2 hours which includes, but is not limited to counter support, processing dog licenses and reconciliation of payments through the Docupet process. In the first 3 to 4 weeks of the implementation of the software, approximately eleven (11) residents attended the counter at Town Hall to purchase a dog tag due to limited computer access or limited knowledge.

2. There was no data regarding how many dogs have been returned to owners because of the municipal dog tag. There was also no data regarding the success rate from Docupet regarding lost dogs found and returned.

Response:

Lost dogs reunited (Town tag) and Docupet success rates

Historically, any dog found with a Town-issued tag could be reunited with the owner when the finder (or an agency such as the Georgian Triangle Humane Society or a local veterinary clinic) contacted the Town and staff confirmed owner information. The Town has not maintained a consistent, auditable metric for reunification outcomes across all pathways. After 12 months of implementation of the software, staff will be able to provide statistics on the following:

- veterinary drop-offs;
- lost pet alerts created;
- reunifications confirmed;
- time to contact owner; and
- after-hours outcomes

Based on staff experience across typical workflows, a reasonable estimate is approximately 25 dogs reunited through tag identification. Staff receive several calls from owners looking for lost pets that have no identification.

With respect to Docupet, the system has only recently been implemented in the Town and, as such, Town-specific outcome data (e.g., lost pet alerts and reunification success rates) is not yet available. Staff recommend reporting back to Council following approximately 12 months of operation.

At that time, staff will provide a summary of key performance metrics, including the number of pet licences issued, lost and found pet reports, reunification rates, and average time to reunification. The report will also include trends in licensing compliance, user engagement, and any operational observations, along with recommendations for program improvements, if applicable.

3. Most importantly there was no report regarding what the cost to the municipality would be to use Docupet.

Response:

Cost to the municipality to use Docupet

Docupet operates under a revenue-sharing model, meaning that when a resident completes a pet licensing transaction, a portion of the fee is retained by the Docupet to cover service delivery (any required postage) and system costs (credit card charges), and the remaining portion is remitted to the Town as licensing revenue. This approach allows the program to operate without ongoing municipal funding or tax levy impacts, aside from the one-time implementation cost previously noted.

Residents may also be presented with optional add-ons (such as upgraded tags, trackers, wallet cards or pet protection services) during the transaction process. These items are entirely voluntary, clearly identified as optional, and are not required to complete a standard dog licence purchase or renewal. These optional services are legitimate offerings provided through the platform and are not scams or misleading charges.

4. There was no data with regard to the cost of administering dog licensing at the municipality in the past. Nor any report on the past revenues from dog tags.

Response:

Historical costs to administer dog licensing and past revenues

Prior to Docupet, administering dog tags involved manual processing by By-law and Finance staff as well as distribution through third-party points of sale (including veterinary clinics and the Georgian Triangle Humane Society). Staff estimate historical administrative staff time costs at approximately \$6,000, plus approximately \$600 for purchasing tags.

Dog licensing revenue for the Town was approximately \$11,665 in 2023, \$12,187 in 2024, and \$5,530 in 2025. Licenses issued were 568 in 2023, 735 in 2024, and 330 in 2025. Staff also note that in 2025 a significant number of unlicensed dogs were identified. This may be attributed to a combination of factors including the requirement to come to Town Hall in person, increase in seasonal residents who don't license pets, and residents that did not perceive enforcement as active. Interaction with residents who had unlicensed dogs was provided with an opportunity to obtain license by a specified timeline and further follow-up was conducted.

5. There were no alternative options given to council for municipal dog licensing.

Response:

Options considered

In evaluating the future delivery of the dog licensing services, staff considered the following options:

1. Maintain Status Quo - The current manual licensing process would continue, requiring residents to attend Town Hall to obtain or renew dog licences. This approach maintains existing workflows and does not require additional system investment; however, it presents limitations in terms of accessibility, efficiency, and customer convenience and payment restrictions. Manual processing also increases administrative workload and may contribute to lower compliance rates due to reduced ease of access.
2. IT digital solution - An internal solution utilizing existing corporate systems, such as Laserfiche, was considered to support a more digitized licensing process. This approach would allow for online or hybrid submission of licence applications, improved record management, and greater internal control over data. While this option enhances efficiency and reduces manual processing, it would require internal development, configuration, and ongoing IT support, along with staff resources to implement and maintain the system.
3. Licensing Platform Software – There were very few licensing softwares available and Docupet dominates as the service provider for many municipalities in Ontario. Digital services such as Docupet provides a fully managed, online licensing platform that includes automated renewals, pet identification services, and integrated public awareness features (e.g., lost pet recovery tools). This option offers increased convenience for residents and can improve compliance rates through online accessibility and automated reminders. It also reduces administrative burden on staff and is a revenue-sharing model, resulting in no or minimal upfront cost to the municipality. Research was conducted with other municipalities in relation to which digital platform they were using and the success of the software within their municipality. Docupet was the number one used platform with great success.
6. “There was a statement on having good reviews regarding Docupet. If one check reviews online yes, there are good reviews there are also reviewing using the word scam and discussion about the aggressive nature of this company upon renewal times.”

Response:

Reviews and customer experience

Staff’s experience to date includes approximately 60 positive comments, particularly from residents who value the ability to license online outside of Town Hall office hours. Staff have received two complaints to date: one related to privacy concerns and one related to the requirement to create separate accounts when residing in more than one jurisdiction.

The Town recognizes that online reviews can include a range of experiences, including concerns expressed by some users in other jurisdictions regarding renewal communications. Staff will continue to monitor resident feedback and will work with the service provider to address customer service issues that arise and to ensure communications remain appropriate and clear.

7. There was discussion regarding Docupet being an agent of the TBM and not a third party. The definition of a third party is a company that is an independent external entity

(vendor, supplier or contractor) hired to provide goods, services or specialized skills. Benefits are costs savings and access to expertise and increased operational focus.

Risks are potential for data, security breaches, compliance issues and dependency on robust management crucial. I believe Docupet to be a third party.

Response:

“Agent” vs “third party” and privacy/security risk considerations

DocuPet is an external service provider engaged by the Town to support the administration of dog licensing services. For the purposes of MFIPPA, the key consideration is that the Town remains accountable for compliance with legislative requirements respecting the protection of personal information and access to records under its control, including where services are delivered through a third-party provider. The IPC’s guidance confirms that accountability for records and personal information remains with the institution throughout the procurement and contract management process. Docupet has also been identified as maintaining SOC 2 controls.

SOC 2 is an independent reporting framework based on criteria relating to security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy, and provides assurance that the service provider maintains formal controls intended to protect information, support secure processing, and reduce the risk of unauthorized access or data security incidents

As noted in Staff Report CS.26.001, the Town worked with the Information Technology Division as part of evaluating and implementing the system. Prior to implementation, staff worked with Docupet and developed the template and provided approval for any correspondence that would be going out to residents.

Docupet currently partners with 62 municipalities in Ontario and more than 330 municipalities and jurisdictions across North America. The Docupet IT team has indicated there has not been a compromise or breach of information.

Residents who prefer not to use online services may continue to attend at Town Hall for in-person assistance to apply for or renew a dog license. Staff will continue to oversee the vendor relationship and ensure the Town’s privacy, security, and service expectations are met through contract and operational management practices.

Other Comments:

Dog licensing remains mandatory in the Town, and licensing fees were held at the same level since 2006 before being increased by \$5 through the Town’s 2026 Fees and Charges By-law. The Town will continue to provide both online and in-person licensing options and will monitor program outcomes and resident feedback.

The Town uses many external software service providers for facility booking, building permit applications, by-law enforcement and finance for tracking property taxes and collection.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

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

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

None

G. Financial Impacts

Estimated net annual savings of \$6,600, which includes Staff time – estimated at \$6,000 and Tag purchases – estimated at \$600. No ongoing municipal expense and no cost to taxation.

H. In Consultation With

Ryan Gibbons, Director of Community Services

Will Wray, Information Technology Manager

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Debbie Young, Manager of By-law and Licensing, bylawadmin@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

Attachment 1 – Correspondence from Debbie Crosskill, dated February 7, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Young
Manager of Bylaw and Licensing

For more information, please contact:
Debbie Young, Manager of Bylaw and Licensing
bylawadmin@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 242

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CS.26.019 Follow-Up to Docupet Software Implementation.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Correspondence of Debbie Crosskill dated February 7, 2026.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 1, 2026

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

Ryan Gibbons - Apr 1, 2026 - 5:10 PM

From: [Carrie Fairley](#)
To: [Debbie Crosskill](#); [Council](#); [SMT](#)
Cc: [Town Clerk](#); [Debbie Young](#)
Subject: RE: Reconsideration vote regarding municipal dog licensing
Date: February 9, 2026 10:48:30 AM

Good morning, Debbie,

I acknowledge receipt of your email and correspondence for inclusion on the February 17, 2026, Council Meeting Agenda.

Thanks, have a nice day!

Carrie Fairley
Acting Deputy Clerk
Secretary-Treasurer to Committee of Adjustment
Town of The Blue Mountains, 32 Mill Street, P.O. Box 310, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
Tel: 519-599-3131 ext. 219 | Fax: 519-599-7723
Email: cfairley@thebluemountains.ca | Website: www.thebluemountains.ca

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

-----Original Message-----

From: Debbie Crosskill [REDACTED]
Sent: February 7, 2026 7:10 PM
To: cgiles@thebluemountains.ca
Cc: Carrie Fairley <cfairley@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Reconsideration vote regarding municipal dog licensing

Sent from my iPhone

Please be advised this letter is for councils consideration.

I would like to request a reconsideration vote by council with the bylaw for dog licenses in the TBM. I requesting this as I do not believe staff made council aware of all the options regarding dog licensing requirements within municipalities in Ontario. I also feel there were some important facts not included in the report on February 2, 2026.

1. There was no data regarding the numbers of hours that this would save staff by using Docupet.
2. There was no data regarding how many dogs have been returned to owners because of the municipal dog tag. There was also no data regarding the success rate from Docupet regarding lost dogs found and returned.
3. Most importantly there was no report regarding what the cost to the municipality would be to use Docupet .
4. There was no data with regards to the cost of administering dog licensing at the municipality in the past. Nor any report on the past revenues from the dog tags.
5. There were no alternative options given to council towards municipal dog licensing.
6. There was a statement on having good reviews regarding Docupet. If one check reviews online, yes, there are good reviews there are also reviews using the word scam and discussion about the aggressive nature of this company upon renewal times.
7. There was discussion regarding Docupet being an agent of the TBM and not a third party.

The definition of a third party is a company that is an independent external entity (vendor, supplier or contractor) hired to provide goods, services or specialized skills. Benefits are costs savings and access to expertise and increased operational focus.

Risks are potential for data, security breaches, compliance issues and dependency on robust management crucial . I believe Docupet to be a third party.

According to the TBM website dog licensing is to ensure the owner takes responsibility for their dog's action so they can be a positive addition to the community.

I believe the majority of dog owners are responsible . An individual who has spayed, neutered and microchipped has shown great responsibility for their dog.

Microchipping is much better than tagging as tags can come loose and be lost. Better quality tags can be purchased at any pet store. These tags come with a more secure clip and the owner can have the dogs name and information engraved on these for the return of a lost dog. Some municipalities require this to mandatory municipal tags.

I would like to suggest another option regarding municipal dog licensing and that is to eliminate it. During the report it was mentioned that dog tag sales had dropped which would suggest people are not participating.

It is disappointing that this option was not made available for councils consideration.

Other municipalities have chosen to eliminate or scale back mandatory dog licensing, citing the high cost of administration compared to low revenue.

Also the rise in more effective methods like microchips. Many municipalities offer lower fees for owners 65 and older.

The following are examples of municipalities in Ontario that have chosen to eliminate rather than contracting to a third party.

Windsor 2025

East Zorra-Tavistock township

Woodstock 2022

Wellington North 2025

South Huron 2025

Lakeshore 2025

Lucan Biddulph 2022

Docupet is available through RENs pet store if individuals would like to use this option.

By eliminating a mandatory license the responsibility is that of the dog owner.

Bylaw would still be responsible for addressing dog off leash or running at large.

I trust that council will review their decision and reflect and consider the option of eliminating a mandatory system.

Debbie Crosskill
Residents of Clarksburg