



Staff Report

Finance

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: February 24, 2025
Report Number: CFS.25.008
Title: Follow-up report to the February 18, 2025 Public Meetings RE: Fees and Charges and Water and Wastewater Rates
Prepared by: Mike Switzer – Manager of Budgets & Accounting/Deputy Treasurer,
Monica Quinlan – Director of Corporate & Financial Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CFS.25.008, entitled “Follow-up report to the February 18, 2025 Public Meetings Re: Fees and Charges and Water and Wastewater Rates” for information purposes;

AND THAT Council direct staff to reduce the Water Administrative Charge in the 2025 Proposed Fees and Charges from \$105 per instance to \$35 per instance.

B. Overview

This report outlines the comments from the Public Meeting for the proposed amendments to the 2025 Fees and Charges as well as Staff’s response to these comments.

C. Background

The proposed amendments to the 2025 Fees and Charges were reviewed as part of the 2025 Draft Budget. On February 18th, 2025, the Town held a Public Meeting to provide the public with the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendments to the 2025 Fees and Charges.

The fees and charges for each department were included in the 2025 Proposed Fees and Charges booklet that was presented as part of the 2025 Budget. The proposed 2025 Fees and Charges were advertised as per the Town’s notice policy and included on the Town’s website.

Staff are proposing that the Fees and Charges By-laws be presented for Council’s consideration at the March 10th, 2025 Council Meeting.

The Town received sixteen written and one verbal comment up to 9:00 a.m. February 14th, 2025, in advance of the Public Meeting (Attachment 1), three after the deadline (Attachment 2) and two at the Public Meeting.

D. Analysis

A summary of the written and verbal comments that were received by the public prior to the 9:00 a.m. February 14th, 2025, deadline along with staffs' responses can be found in Attachment 1.

Verbal comments received at the Public Meeting held on February 18th, 2025

1) Paul Clements - Thornbury Pickleball Club

Mr. Clements spoke about the different user groups for pickleball and asked Council to reflect on end user affordability and the overall community benefits before finalizing the 2025 Budget; Thornbury Pickleball Club, Events for Life, Special Olympics, and Private Rentals. Mr. Clements continued to comment on the other group subsidies offered by the Town and how the increase does not compare to pickleball and asking why the pickleball users are not deemed as worthy. Thornbury Pickleball Club has become a revenue source.

Staff Response

Based on the Town's 2024 Fees and Charges Pickleball costs are \$15/court/hour less a 30% subsidy provided to user groups resulting in a rate of \$10.50/court/hour. Assuming 4 participants this is a cost of \$2.63 per person per hour. The 2025 Proposed Fees and Charges for the Town is increasing the Pickleball costs to \$20/court/hour less a 10% subsidy for user groups resulting in a rate of \$18/court/hour or \$4.50 per person (based on 4 participants). This results in an increase of \$1.88 per person per hour.

Parks and Recreation services are subsidized as it is a tax supported function. User fee charges are intended to help offset the impact to the tax levy by imposing charges to those who directly benefit from the service.

In comparison with other municipalities the Town's user fees for Pickleball are at the average rate amongst other peer municipalities noting that no other (among those reviewed) includes a subsidy. The increase is meant to align our fees with our peers and reflect the increased cost of providing the services.

2) Robert Johnston - Pickleball Support

Mr. Johnston wants to mirror Paul Clements comments regarding pickleball, in support of what he is saying. Mr. Johnston rents the facility and pays up front for the year and the fee increase did catch user groups by surprise. Indoor facilities – if increase is around cost recovery, he supports that. For the outdoor courts, the proposed increase is 100% increase, and the courts are maintained by the volunteers who rent there and has heard that the courts are trying to compete with privately owned indoor facilities that have facilities and courts that have been specifically designed for pickleball with proper surfaces and lighting. Outdoor courts are great, indoor surface is poor, lighting is terrible and ceilings are too low.

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Municipal staff maintain the outdoor courts as part of their service delivery (put up nets, maintain fencing, clean court surfaces). The increase in the outdoor court fee is meant to align the cost for the service with other rates for consistency.

E. Strategic Priorities

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

N/A

G. Financial Impacts

The Town collects fees and charges for various services to help reduce the burden on taxpayers, thereby decreasing the amount required through annual property taxes.

H. In Consultation With

N/A

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting which took place on February 18th, 2025. 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 Monica Quinlan, Director of Corporate & Financial Services directorfit@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Public Comments received prior to the deadline.
2. Public Comments received after the deadline.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Quinlan
Director of Corporate & Financial Services

For more information, please contact:
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