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Town of Aurora
Committee of the Whole Report
No. FIN24-044

Subject: 2025-26 Rates and Fees Update with Bylaw
Prepared by: Laura Sheardown, Advisor, Financial Management
Department: Finance
Date: October 1, 2024

Recommendation

1. That Report No. FIN24-044 be received; and
2. That a by-law be enacted to set the 2025 and 2026 Fees and Charges for applications, permits, use of Town property, the sale of documents and for the prescribed service charges for administrative matters itemized on the attached schedules.

Executive Summary

All fees and charges listed on the schedules attached to the Fees and Charges By-law are for user pay services, where the requested party is the sole beneficiary from the service. Most of the fees are on full cost recovery basis, which allows the Town to fully recover the costs of providing a specific service or use of property.

The regular review of the Fees and Charges By-law provides staff with an opportunity to ensure the Town is sufficiently recovering the cost of user pay services and make changes if necessary. Please note that this review of the by-law is adjusting fees and charges for 2025 and 2026, which is required to continue to align with the Town's multi-year budgeting framework.

- Inflationary increases to fees and charges were previously approved by Council
- Changes to the Town's fees and charges for 2025 and 2026 mostly relate to the correction of previous incorrect amounts and fee/description changes
- Should a need arise to modify the fees and charges for 2025 or 2026 during the year, the Town's Fees and Charges By-law would require amendment

Background

Last review of Fees and Charges By-Law

Council last reviewed the Town's Fees and Charges By-law in October of 2023. The by-law is structured to align fees with departmental owners in the form of schedules for each department to facilitate reviews and updates as required. It has been the Town's practice to review the attached schedules every year and to make revisions as required.

Analysis

Inflationary increases to fees and charges were previously approved by Council

As per Town's multi-year operating budget framework, Council approved inflationary increases to most 2025 and 2026 fees and charges as part of the process last year. These inflationary increases are necessary to maintain desired applicable service cost recovery benchmarks.

Changes to the Town's fees and charges for 2025 and 2026 mostly relate to the correction of previous incorrect amounts and fee/description changes

All proposed fee changes that have not yet been presented to Council are presented in a separate column from those previously approved on the schedules (flagged with the '*' symbol) and the reasons and rationales are listed below within this report. The final schedules to the Fees and Charges By-law will only include the 2025 and 2026 fee columns.

Any changes to fee explanations include the old information being ~~struck-through~~ and the new information is underlined within the schedules.

Schedule A – General Fees and Charges

No changes are being requested.

Schedule B – Planning and Development Services

No changes are being requested.

Schedule C – Corporate Services

The fee for Pool Enclosure Re-Inspection is being increased to match similar fees across all of the schedules that recognize the additional cost of having to revisit locations that do not meet the requirements the first time.

Schedule D – Community Services

The changes to this schedule are a combination of correcting previous calculation errors, adding additional descriptions/areas to fee categories and expansion of deposit ranges:

- Expanded the description to include Outdoor Space (Items 1h, k-o)
- Increased the range of damage deposit (Item 1m)
- Addition of a Permit Cancellation Fee (Item 1s)
- Adjusted the range for the Equipment & Weights Memberships to bring them in line with the Group Fitness Memberships (Item 10k)
- Corrected the inflation calculation for 2025 and 2026 (Items 11b, 15j, 18r, u)
- Removed information from descriptions that are duplicated in Ice Allocation Procedure (Items 17c-d)
- Expanded the categories to include the SARC gymnasium (Items 18g-j)
- Addition of an Outside Catering Fee (18v)

Schedule E – Operational Services

No changes are being requested.

Schedule F – Finance

Finance would like to request the adjustment of a couple of fee descriptions for clarification and the increase of the Payment Recalled By Bank/Refund Requested to better recognize the staff effort required to process these requests.

Schedule G – Building Division

A correction to the Portable Fee for 2025 and 2026 due to a typing error.

Schedule H – Development Planning Division

No changes are being requested.

Schedule I – By-law Services Division

By-law Services is proposing a couple of new fees starting in 2025:

- Kennel Inspection Fee – for initial site inspections and reinspection when required
- Accessible/EV/No Parking Signs – for the sale of the signs to plazas and private property owners

By-law Services is also proposing the elimination of the Property Standards fees connected to By-law 4044-99 as it has been repealed and these items are covered by other fees within the current Fees and Charges By-law.

Schedule J – Animal Services

Animal Services has increased several fees included in their schedule to offset its higher service delivery costs arising from transportation, disposal, feeding and boarding.

Schedule K – Access Aurora

The 2026 fee for Commissioning of Forms has been raised by \$0.50 to make the fee easier to manage for cash transactions.

Schedule L – Short Term Rentals

By-law Services would like to add a Short-Term Rental Re-Inspection Fee to their schedule that aligns with similar fees on other schedules and recognizes the additional cost associated with the need to re-inspect if the rental does not meet the requirements on the initial visit.

Should a need arise to modify the fees and charges for 2025 or 2026, the Town's Fees and Charges By-law would require amendment.

As staff are setting the Town's fees and charges two years into the future, there is a possibility that one or more of these fees and charges may require revision as new information becomes available. In instances where staff determine that a new fee or charge revision needed, a replacement fee and charge schedule for the year in question will be brought to Council for its review and approval.

Advisory Committee Review

The Finance Advisory Committee is not mandated to review the proposed fee changes prior to the review by Committee of the Whole.

Legal Considerations

Section 11(2)(3) and Section 391(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* allow a municipality to enact by-laws for its financial management, and in particular, to impose fees or charges on persons for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it. Other provisions affecting the setting of fees and charges appear in the *Planning Act* and the *Building Code Act, 1992*.

Financial Implications

The proposed revised fees have been used by staff in the development of the 2025 and 2026 revenue projections which form a critical component of the Town's budget for non-tax revenues for each year.

The proposed 2025-26 fees and charges have been adjusted to reflect changes to departmental costs in providing applicable services to users. All fee increases will alleviate pressure on the 2025-26 tax base; when costs increase because of inflation, but non-tax revenues do not, the tax levy must accommodate this additional budget burden. As such, it is important that the Town's fees and charges keep pace with inflation; the proposed fees and charges contained within this bylaw strive to achieve this goal. Council should be aware that the fees presented in these schedules include HST where applicable.

Communications Considerations

The Town of Aurora will use 'inform' as the level of engagement for this report.

Finance and Corporate Communications staff will work together to ensure the proposed fee changes are posted in accordance with the Town's Notice Provision Policy.

Climate Change Considerations

The information contained within this report does not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

Reviewing and updating the Town's fees and charges on a regular basis for user pay services contributes to achieving the Strategic Plan guiding principle of 'Leadership in Corporate Management' and improves transparency and accountability to the community.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may choose to accept, amend or reject any or all the recommendations of this report.
2. Leave fees at previously approved 2025 and 2026 levels and absorb the additional cost of providing the services for the next two years.

Conclusions

Staff recommend endorsement of the proposed changes to the Fees and Charges By-law. As part of the regular update of the Town's fees and charges, staff have ensured that all changes brought forward are a fair representation of the cost of these services and that they are in line with surrounding municipalities for similar services.

Attachments

Schedule A – General Fees and Charges

Schedule B – Planning and Development Services

Schedule C – Corporate Services

Schedule D – Community Services

Schedule E – Operational Services

Schedule F – Finance

Schedule G – Building Services

Schedule H – Development Planning Division

Schedule I – By-law Services Division

Schedule J – Animal Services Division

Schedule K – Access Aurora

Schedule L – Sort Term Rentals

Previous Reports

FIN23-038 2024-26 Rates and Fees Update

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on September 12, 2024

Approvals

Approved by Rachel Wainwright-van Kessel, CPA, CMA, Director, Finance

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer