

Report

Date February 21, 2023
Subject Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 3894

File:

PURPOSE

To introduce Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 3894, 2023, which proposes establishing fees over multiple years and updating the fees in relation to development permit applications, water, sewer, curbside collection and wharves.

BACKGROUND

The Fees and Charges Bylaw is the central repository for all fees and charges so that they are not scattered throughout other bylaws. Section 8 of the bylaw provides that "Council must annually review the fees and charges in this Bylaw to ensure they are sufficient to offset their associated service-delivery costs."

DISCUSSION

At the December 13, 2022, Committee of the Whole meeting, it was resolved,

"THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 3784 to increase development application fees as per Attachment 1 to the December 13, 2022 report from the Director of Planning and Building."

At the January 10, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting, it was resolved,

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to prepare the Financial Plan Bylaw, a Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw and a Sewer and Water Parcel Tax Amendment Bylaw to:

- (1) Increase Chemainus water metered minimum and parcel tax by 5% per year for five years;
- (2) Increase Crofton water metered minimum and parcel tax by 5% per year for five years;
- (3) Increase South End water metered minimum and parcel tax by 3% per year for five years; and,
- (4) Increase metered water rates (for amounts over the minimum) for all water utilities by 3% per year for five years.

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to prepare the Financial Plan Bylaw, a Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw and a Sewer and Water Parcel Tax Amendment Bylaw to:

- (1) Increase Chemainus sewer parcel tax and user fees by 2% per year for four years beginning in 2024;
- (2) Increase Crofton sewer parcel tax and user fees by 3% per year for five years;
- (3) Increase South End sewer parcel tax and user fees by 5% per year for five years; and,
- (4) Increase Maple Bay sewer treatment plant parcel tax and user fee by 3% per year for five years.

At the February 1, 2023, Council meeting, staff were directed to increase the garbage fee in 2023 to \$183 for phase one of the Automated Collection Program.

In addition to these changes, staff reviewed the other line items and recommend adding Mobile Home Park Permit Fees and changes to Wharf Fees.

- *Mobile Home Park Permit Fees*

Mobile Home Park Permit Fees were inadvertently removed from the bylaw in 2015, but some applications related to mobile home parks are still received. Based on the level of work involved in reviewing these applications, staff recommend a charge similar to that of development permits at \$2,500 plus \$50 per mobile home space.

- *Wharf Fees*

Staff completed a comparison of rates of other small craft harbours and wharves and found that North Cowichan's rates were lower than average. Staff also considered the costs associated with managing the wharves and the savings required for replacement and repairs in the future. Monthly and quarterly rates at both Chemainus and Maple Bay Wharves are recommended to increase by 18-30% in recognition of the limited amount of space available and the demand for short-term spaces. Additionally, commercial rates in Crofton are recommended to increase by 10%. All other fees are recommended to stay the same or increase by a modest 2%. The proposed rates will help ensure that the wharves attract enough revenue to cover all related costs.

- *Timing of Fee Changes*

Five year changes were approved by the Committee of the Whole for sewer and water fees and have been proposed for wharf fees. These will take effect at the beginning of each year.

As some of the Development Application Fees are increasing substantially, the bylaw includes a delay until June 15 for the fees to come into force and effect. This will allow time for notification of the coming fee change.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council give first, second and third readings to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023.
 - This option is consistent with the previous direction given by Council.
2. This Alternative Option would enable Council to amend any of the fees proposed. The following motions must be considered individually, as any changes to the bylaw must occur between first and third readings.
 - (1) THAT Council give first and second readings to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023;
 - (2) THAT Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023 be amended by:
 - (a) *(Council to identify which sections are to be changed, including the item number and the text that is to be stricken, removed or added)*
 - (3) THAT Council give third reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023 as amended.
 - If Council chooses this option, any changes to the fee amount should be to lower the amount as

the Municipality is not allowed to charge more in a fee than it costs to provide the service. If Council would like to increase any of the fees, the bylaw should be referred back to staff to provide a report on how the fee was calculated.

IMPLICATIONS

Five year fee structures provide certainty and stability to ratepayers and assist with implementing future fees. These rates can be amended at any time in the same way that the other fees within the bylaw can also be amended by bylaw when and if new information becomes available.

When the bylaw is approved, staff will update any website information and notices to reflect the new fees. The Financial Plan Bylaw includes the expected revenue from the proposed fee increases for curbside service, water rates, sewer rates and development application fees.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023.

Report prepared by:



Talitha Soldera, CPA, CGA
Chief Financial Officer

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment: Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3894, 2023