



MUNICIPALITY OF THAMES CENTRE

REPORT NO. CLERK-018-23

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Interim Clerk/Legislative Services Manager
MEETING DATE: December 11, 2023
SUBJECT: Proposed 2024 Fees and Charges

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CLERK-018-23 be received for information;

AND THAT the proposed 2024 Fees and Charges be approved by by-law.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to establish 2024 Fees and Charges.

BACKGROUND:

The fees and charges that the Municipality of Thames Centre administers is reviewed, updated and approved by Council each year. New fees for service and adjustments are based on review of market conditions, participation rates and external factors.

Most municipal services are subsidized by property taxes. User fee increases allow the Municipality to reduce the impact on the tax rate while continuing to provide high levels of service to our customers.

In accordance with the Municipality's Notice By-law, notice of the proposed changes was given to the public by posting on the municipal website. The notice, including all proposed schedules for each department, was posted on November 29, 2023, asking the public to provide any written comments by December 6, 2023. There were no comments received by the public.

COMMENTS:

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

➤ **Administration Fees – Schedule A**

- Removal of Fence Viewers Fees (as per By-law No. 68-2023 – Division Fences Cost Apportionment By-law)
- Addition of a new \$100 fee for Municipally Significant Event Applications (as per policy CP-A-3.5, adopted on April 24, 2023)
- Document Search Fees – these fees are identical to MFIPPA fees, but apply to generic record searches that are conducted outside of the MFIPPA process (these fees were previously established in the Building Schedule but have been moved to Administration, to ensure all departments are covered)
- Addition of mileage to assist with cost recovery of staff attending sites as needed (by-law enforcement, etc.)

➤ **By-law Enforcement – Schedule K (New)**

- Schedule K was created for fees relating to by-law enforcement, to be organized separately from the Building Fees
- Animal Control – Veterinary Care (as per current Animal Control By-law)
- Addition of Property Standards fees – pricing is in alignment with other municipalities' of similar size
- Addition of fees to of time to assist with cost recovery of by-law enforcement
 - Staff time - Charge would be levied when property has failed to comply and staff having to conduct cleanup, etc.
 - External Disbursements (professional service, contract services, etc.)
- Addition of fee for follow-up visits where there is continued noncompliance.
- Addition of Noise Exemption Application fee (as per current Noise by-law)

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

➤ **Schedule “C” - Building Fees**

Fees have been increased using a phased-in approach and consistent with the Building Fees Study conducted by BMA Management Consulting Inc. and subject to CPI increase; all of which were endorsed by Thames Centre Council on September 13, 2021. A flat fee of \$180 has been applied to temporary structures consistent with Council Resolution No. 141-2023 and subject to CPI increase. For all other building fees, the CPI increase has been applied.

By-law enforcement related matters, including but not limited to animal control and food truck licensing, have been removed and are now captured under new Schedule “K” - Compliance.

➤ **Schedule “D” – Planning Fees**

Fees have been increased in some cases to ensure consistency with the Municipality of Middlesex Centre and the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc which offer comparable levels of service. A new fee for Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator Order Requests (CIHAO) in the order of \$3,500.00 has been added, consistent with Council Resolution No. 95-2023.

PUBLIC WORKS

➤ **Schedule “E” – Environmental Services Fees**

- Water Consumption Rates increased 2.5% over 2023 rates as per Thames Centre 2020 Water Wastewater Rate Study
- Water Meter Rates, Environmental Certificate fee, Tampering Charges adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Water Service disconnection/reconnection after regular hours charge – fee adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Disconnection & Reconnection of Water Services rates adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Inspection, Thawing, Commissioning Fees adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Water meter checked for accuracy at customers request (1” and under) charge and failure to submit a BFP test report adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Wastewater Consumption Rates increased 2.0% over 2022 rates as per Thames Centre 2020 Water Wastewater Rate Study
- Other Rates (sanitary) including Failure to Install satisfactory connection adjusted to include 4% CPI increase
- Stormwater Tampering Charges and Inspection Fees adjusted to include 4% CPI
- Cost to purchase a new recycling blue box increased from \$12.00 to \$12.50
- Stormwater Services Rate is indexed annually resulting in 4% increase over 2023 from \$11.36 to \$11.79

➤ **Schedule “F” Transportation Fees**

- All Fees adjusted to include 4% CPI

➤ **Schedule “G” - Drainage Fees**

- No adjustments.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

➤ **Schedule “I” - Recreation/Parks/Facilities Fees**

General Changes:

Unless noted otherwise in this section, all Community Services & Facilities rates and fees have been increased by the Consumer Price Index (4.0%). All fees increased by this amount are highlighted in yellow in the attached Schedule "I."

Consistent with the 2023 rates & fees adjustments for this department:

- these new rates and fees come into effect as of April 1, 2024, until May 31, 2025, as indicated at the top of Schedule "I"
- all fees that are normally paid in cash have the CPI applied and then rounded to the nearest dollar (these fees are highlighted in orange)
- all new fees are highlighted in green.

Changes Per Section of the Schedule:

Meeting Rooms:

- o A second section has been added to this part of the listing for the four larger meeting spaces (as specified in price list). These four rental options are priced at exactly 1.5 times the rental rate of the smaller rooms, with the smaller rooms priced in the first section. This price difference was already the case for the double meeting room at Thorndale Lions C.C. in the 2023 price list, while 2024 will see the largest two multi-purpose room in the new Lions Senior Centre added to this list.
- o The new courtyard will only be accessible via multi-purpose rooms #2 and #3 from the Lions Senior Centre and also from VON. As a result, this space will be included in the room rental price, when requested and available.

Ice Rental/Admission Fees:

- o due to the low price on some drop in rates (ie. Adult & Senior Skate), when we apply the CPI adjustment each year and then adjust for rounding, the price has not increased for at least the past 3 years. As a result, for 2024 we have taken the 2020 rate and adjusted for the 2022 (4.4%), 2023 (6.9%) and 2024 (4.0%) CPI's, which has generally then lead to the first price adjustment for several years (ie. \$1.00 increase with HST). This approach still leaves \$3.00 public skate for children unchanged.

Lions Senior Centre:

- o With the renovation project ongoing for over half of next year, we propose no adjustment to the Senior Centre Membership fee for 2024, with plans to increase to \$30.00 (including HST) for 2025 membership.
- o

Thames Centre Playground:

- proposing an increase of \$2.00 per day, bringing the weekly price from \$185.00 to \$195.00 per week, which is still less than comparable programs in neighbouring municipalities and in-line with daily daycare rates. This will also help offset a portion of the net loss this program experiences. After this rate was \$175/week for many years, we did just increase the price by \$10/week last year.

Drop-In Programs:

- last year the Pickleball Pass was less in Dorchester than Thorndale, due to 6 hours versus 9 hours offered per week. For 2024 both locations will offer 9 hours a week, so rates are now the same.

Advertising:

- These large dollar amounts were not adjusted by CPI, in order to maintain the round dollar amounts. These amounts still provide ample advertising revenue.

Memorial Bench Program:

- This amount has not changed, as it still covers the cost, with brochures already printed with this rate.

➤ **Schedule “J” - Dorchester Union Cemetery**

General Changes:

Unless noted otherwise in this section, all Dorchester Union Cemetery rates and fees have been increased by the Consumer Price Index (4.0%). All fees increased by this amount are highlighted in yellow in the attached Schedule “J.” In addition, and changes in wording are highlighted in yellow, with all such changes simply being for clarification. Items highlighted in blue have been added or edited to provide clarity.

Changes Per Section of the Schedule:

- Care & Maintenance fees are set by Province for monuments and markers. To further explain Care & Maintenance, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) is a government delegated authority and not-for-profit corporation administering provisions of the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002 (FBCSA) on behalf of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery. These fees reflect the changes which came into force January 1, 2022, noting that monument and marker fees are based on size and therefore do not change as opposed to the Care & Maintenance fees on Interment Rights fees that are based on price.

- There is one new fee, which has been highlighted in green. This addition is the result of the repurchase of interment rights for a niche on the East side of the E location columbarium wall in the North Cremation Garden. Wall niche pricing had previously been removed when the niche columbaria wall niches had been sold out.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

All changes in the 2024 Fees and Charges By-law will be implemented into the 2024 Operating Budgets.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

Pillar: Sustainability

Goal: Ensure that the Municipality maintains fiscal prudence, along with affordable and sustainable taxation levels.

CONSULTATION:

Diane Gallinger, Interim Director of Financial Services/Treasurer
Marc Bancroft, Director of Planning & Development Services
Steve MacDonald, Director of Community Services & Facilities
Jarrod Craven, Director of Public Works
Nick Dorken, Fire Chief
Alanna Shaw, By-law Compliance Officer

REFERENCES:

By-law No. 6-2023, 2023 Fees and Charges (current by-law)

ATTACHMENTS:

Schedules for Proposed 2024 Fees and Charges

Prepared by: J. Nethercott, Interim Deputy Clerk

Reviewed by: S. Henshaw, Interim Clerk/Legislative Services Manager

Reviewed by: D. Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer