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**Date:** February 22, 2021  
**To:** Mayor and Council  
**Author:** Ryan McLeod  
**RE:** 2021 Fee By-law Amendments  
**Report No.:** FS-2021-05

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## **AIM**

To provide Council with information relating to the proposed changes to the Fees and Charges By-law 024-2020 and the Building Code Fees and Charges by-law 025-2020.

## **BACKGROUND**

In accordance with section 391 of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the "Act"), the municipality is authorized to pass by-laws imposing fees or charges on persons:

- (a) for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it;
- (b) for costs payable by it for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of any other municipality or any local board; and
- (c) for the use of its property including property under its control.

Each year, Administration reviews the fees charged for various services and activities to ensure they remain appropriate.

## **DISCUSSION**

The proposed changes to the Fees and Charges By-law 24-2020 and the Building Code Fees and Charges by-law 25-2020 are outlined in the attachments to this report. Any changes to the wording of the by-law, fee amounts or fee descriptions have been highlighted. Details on the more significant amendments are discussed below:

## **Administrative Services**

### **Property Information Report (PIR) Fees**

PIRs are typically requested by potential real estate purchasers or their agents. These reports provide information on municipal services, outstanding work orders, fire concerns, zoning and outstanding financial obligations associated with the property. These reports require circulation through nine managers or supervisors and the current fee does not sufficiently cover the staff time required to process these requests. Administration is proposing an increase of \$100 for each type of PIR.

### **Duplicate Tax/Water Notice Fees**

The Town currently charges \$10.00 per request for a duplicate Tax or Water notice. Administration is proposing to waive the fee if the account is enrolled in our paperless billing service. This is to encourage enrollment of the service which will benefit both the property owner and allow for effective use of Town resources.

## **Licenses**

### **Pheasant Fees**

The Town collects these fees on behalf of the Gosfield North Sportsmen Association. As per resolution 606-2020 from the October 26, 2020 Council meeting, Council authorized Administration to include the proposed pheasant hunting license fees in the 2021 fees and charges by-law. The fee increase is in response to the rising costs associated with raising the birds. The Town does not retain any portion of this fee, so there is no financial implications to the Town.

## **Infrastructure and Engineering Services**

### **Local Improvement Charges**

A review of the 2020 tenders for storm and sanitary work was completed to propose an increase to the maximum fixed rate to \$290 per metre for sanitary sewers and \$250 per metre for storm sewers. This fixed rate represents the maximum charge to benefitting properties for municipal work performed, under a local improvement project. Since any excess costs above the fixed rate is charged to the Town, it is reasonable to set the proposed fixed rates based on actual recent bids.

Once the proposed increase is approved by Council, Administration will update its Local Improvement Policy to reflect these new rates.

## **Parks and Recreation Services**

### **Carnegie Instructional Fee**

Similar to other Town facilities, a rental charge of \$30 per hour at the Carnegie facility for instructional use is being proposed. This fee is consistent with instructional fees at the Arena, Ridgeview Hall and the Unico Centre.

### **Commemorative Program Fees**

The Town has been providing this program for several years and administration is proposing to add this service to the fees by-law. Historically, the Town has subsidized a portion of the cost. The proposed fee reflects the full cost. As a result, the recommended

fee is \$550 for a commemorative tree and \$1,650 for a commemorative bench, including the memorial plaque.

### **COVID-19**

Administration is proposing that Council provide Administration with the authority to reduce facility rental fees due to COVID-19 capacity limitations. The authority would be limited to a maximum reduction of 50% of the standard fee. For example, if a venue had a normal capacity limit of 100, however, due to COVID-19 restrictions the gathering limit is 25 people, Administration would be allowed to reduce the fee by 50%.

During this pandemic, it is an ongoing challenge for Administration to support its community while adhering to the health regulations. Users are confronted with evaluating the cost and risk against the benefits of the service. By allowing Administration with this authority, Administration can quickly react and provide flexibility with the fees to provide some relief during this unpredictable pandemic.

### **Planning Services**

As part of a multi-year strategy to reduce the cost of Planning Services on the general tax levy, Administration is proposing a number of modest increases to various planning department fees. Refer to schedule A of the attached for details. In contemplation of these fees, consideration was given to the amount of time required to process an application as well as the rates imposed by neighbouring municipalities.

### **Committee of Adjustment Fees**

Administration is recommending the fees for Consents to be specific to an 'initial severance' or 'additional severances' when included in the same application.

### **Major Development Agreement Fees**

This agreement was applicable to Plan of Subdivisions or Condominium applications. Administration is proposing to remove this classification and simply incorporate it into the proposed Plan of Subdivision and Plan of Condominium fees.

### **Plan of Condominium Fees**

As discussed above, the increase to this fee from \$3,300 to \$3,900 is due to inclusion of the Major Agreement fee to eliminate the need for a separate agreement. Since there will be some savings to only process one application instead of two, the increase for the plan of condominium is based on 50% of the 2020 major agreement fee plus a modest increase due to the multi-year strategy discussed above.

### **Plan of Subdivision Fees**

As discussed above in the changes to the Major Agreement Fees, the increase to this fee from \$4,800 to \$5,900 is due to inclusion of the Major Agreement fee to eliminate the need for a separate agreement. Since there will be some savings to only process one application instead of two, the increase for the plan of subdivision is based on 50% of the 2020 major agreement fee plus an additional \$500 due to an increase in staff resources for consultation and review. A modest increase due to the multi-year strategy discussed above is also included.

### **Sidewalk Patio Application Fees**

These fees were previously approved in a policy document and are being added to the by-law as a housekeeping matter. The initial application cost will remain at \$600 and annual renewals will remain at \$200.

### **Police Services**

Police Service Fees are set by the Ontario Provincial Police (“O.P.P.”). As a result, Administration is proposing that these fees are removed from our by-law for the purpose of ensuring the community understands the Town has no involvement with the setting of these fees. However, the fee schedule on the Town’s webpage will reflect the O.P.P.’s fee schedule that was effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and will be updated annually.

### **Building Fees – By-law 25-2020**

The Building Department is proposing a few amendments to the fees currently established in By-law 25-2020. The fee increases are required to keep pace with rising operating costs and to better align their fees with the cost of providing the service. The increase will help offset associated costs for contract workers, additional staff and assist with maintaining a satisfactory level of customer service. The more significant changes are as follows:

#### **Residential Building Permits**

Management is recommending an increase to residential building permit fees from \$1.10 per square foot to \$1.15 per square foot. This would represent a \$100 increase on a 2,000 square foot home.

Administration is proposing to remove the fast track service and the associated fees due to challenges of providing this service as a result of high permit volumes. It is also recommended that basement fees apply to both finished and unfinished basements because it is common during final occupancy inspection that the property owner has finished the basement without paying the related permit fees.

#### **Greenhouse Building Permits**

Management is recommending an increase to the Greenhouse permit fees from \$0.04 per square foot to \$0.05 per square foot. This would represent an \$8,712 increase on a 20 acre greenhouse.

### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

With the exception of Building and Water Department revenue, any revenue generated from user fees will reduce the amount of revenue required from general taxation, and therefore reduce pressure on the property tax rate.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

All departments were consulted for input on revisions to the Town's fees and charges bylaws.

Notice that this by-law being considered by Council has been given to the public pursuant to the Town's Notice Policy and the proposed amendments were available for viewing on the Town website.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopts By-law 15-2021, being a by-law to impose fees and charges, and that the local improvement charges in this by-law supersedes the rates in the Local Improvement Policy which will be updated and brought to Council in 2021;

That Council adopts By-law 16-2021, being a by-law to regulate permits issued under the Building Code Act, set fees, and establish a Code of Conduct for the Chief Building Official and Inspectors;

That Council authorize the Director of Financial and IT Services to reduce recreational fees, by a maximum of 50%, in accordance with occupancy limits as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

*Ryan McLeod*

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Director of Financial and IT Services