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Date: January 8, 2018
To: Mayor and Council
Author: Roberta Baines, Deputy Clerk – Administrative Services
RE: 2018 Cat Spay and Neuter Voucher Program
Report No.: CS-2018-02

AIM

To provide an update on the Windsor-Essex County Humane Society Cat Spay and Neuter Voucher Program ("Voucher Program").

BACKGROUND

The Town has participated in the Voucher Program since 2014 in an effort to help control the overpopulation of feral cats. Last year the Town allocated \$6,500 in the animal control budget towards the Voucher Program. Administration allocated funds between feral cats (\$5,750) and qualified families (\$750). Each voucher is worth \$75 and is valid for 90 days.

The voucher is redeemed at participating veterinarian clinics and the remaining amount owing is the responsibility of the resident. Most costs associated with the surgery are covered by the voucher amount. Veterinarians honoring the vouchers are required to authenticate the voucher through the identification of the applicant. The veterinarian must invoice the Town with the signed voucher attached within 30 days of performing the surgery.

DISCUSSION

The Voucher Program is advertised through the Town's website, digital sign, social media and the newspaper when the applications for vouchers are available. Historically vouchers have been available May 1 each year. The overall response from residents has been positive; however the funds allocated to qualified families is consistently underutilized. Administration will continue to raise awareness for low income vouchers through advertising to residents in an effort to increase participation.

In 2017, the Town only allocated \$6,500 towards the Voucher Program. All vouchers were issued, except one. As of December 29, 2017 the Town has paid \$3,300 in invoices which

is a little over half of the vouchers that were issued. Nineteen of those vouchers have a December expiry date; which explains outstanding invoices to be received from participating veterinary clinics. It should be noted that approximately six residents advised they were having difficulty trapping the feral cats in order to bring them in for the procedure. When requested, voucher expiry date extensions were granted. The trapping issue might be the main reason why some vouchers will not be redeemed.

With the implementation of the ear-tipping requirement in 2017 for feral cats, this program continued to be in high demand with residents. We received a positive response from both the veterinary clinics and the residents regarding this new requirement. The benefits of ear tipping include: identification that feral cats are being cared for within our community, reduction of stress on the cat in being recaptured, and financial control and accountability of the Voucher Program.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The financial consideration is that \$6,500 be allocated from the Animal Control Budget for 2018 Cat Spay and Neuter Voucher Program.

CONSULTATIONS

Jennifer Astrologo, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Sandra Zwiers, Director of Financial Services
Windsor Essex County Humane Society

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the 2018 Cat Spay and Neuter Voucher Program Report for information and defer the 2018 Voucher Program until budget is approved.

Roberta Baines

Roberta Baines, BA
Deputy Clerk – Administrative Services

Jennifer Astrologo

Jennifer Astrologo, B.H.K. (Hons), LL.B
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Peggy Van Mierlo-West, C.E.T.
Chief Administrative Officer