

DATE OF MEETING DECEMBER 16, 2024

AUTHORED BY ANA FRANCISCO, ASSISTANT MANAGER

SUBJECT FEES AND CHARGES AMENDMENT BYLAW 2024, NO. 7336.13

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To introduce “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” for first, second and third reading.

Recommendation

That:

1. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” (a bylaw to add fees and charges for the Finance Department) pass first reading;
2. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” pass second reading; and,
3. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” pass third reading.

BACKGROUND

Municipal best practice is that all fees and charges be contained in the same bylaw for easier reference. This amendment is before Council to add clarity to the application of Finance Department Fees and to introduce the leak adjustment fee from the Waterworks Rate and Regulation Bylaw to the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

DISCUSSION

Staff are proposing a few key changes to the Finance Department’s fees. This will provide a more streamlined and accessible system for managing and referencing fees.

Key changes:

1. User Rates Leak Adjustment Fee:
 - The adjustment fee was removed from the Waterworks Rate and Regulation Bylaw in the amendment bylaw 7004.22.
 - Previously the fee to process a leak adjustment was the lesser of ten percent (10%) of the amount of any credit to the account, except the fee may not be less than \$5 or more than \$25.
 - Staff reviewed the fee being charged by other BC municipalities and the results are shown below:

Municipality	Adjustment Fee
Abbotsford	\$50
Burnaby	N/A
Chilliwack	15% of adjustment
City of Duncan	\$20
Delta	N/A
Kamloops	\$25
Regional District of Nanaimo	\$50
Saanich	N/A

- Staff are proposing a flat administration fee of \$20. This is based on the average administration fee collected over the last three years and is reasonable in comparison to the fee charged by other BC municipalities:

Year	# of Adjustments	Total Revenue Collected	Rounded Average
2023	458	\$10,282	\$22
2022	330	\$ 7,596	\$23
2021	359	\$ 7,653	\$21

Total administration fee collected to date in 2024 are \$8,756 for a total of 379 adjustments and an average of \$23.

The recommendation is to have a set fee due to the administrative work to process an adjustment, which often includes monitoring the account for the next reading to ensure the leak has been fixed and to check if further adjustments are necessary. Additionally, on average the credit generated from leak adjustment has historically led to an administration fee of the maximum \$25 fee.

- This fee would be applicable per adjustment instance, so in the case where a leak adjustment must be processed over more than one billing period, including a reading override, the fee would be charged once.
2. Addition of a fee for printed copies of 'User Rates Statement'
 - This fee is similar to the 'Property Tax Notice & Statement' and the 'Property Listing' fees. The proposed fee is \$2 per statement.
 - Each year Revenue Services staff receives requests for copies of User Rates Statements for income tax purposes and from property management companies. Although the statements can be accessed online several residents and companies require that a copy be mailed to them, or that copies are available for pick up at the Service and Resource Centre.
 3. Clarification on how the following fees apply:
 - "Photocopying of documents"- fee for both black and white and colour copies is per page.
 - "Property Listing of Outstanding Taxes for Mortgage Companies" – this fee is per folio.
 - "Property Listing for Property Management Companies or Other Agents for Properties" – this fee is per folio.

- “Property Tax Notice and Statement” – this fee is applicable per notice or statement for printed and electronic copies for non-owners and only applicable to printed copies for owners for each previous year.
- “Refund Processing Fee” – this fee is applicable per account.
- “Returned NSF” – A \$25 fee is applicable to each payor for up to five (5) accounts and then the cost is \$5 per account per adjustment.
 - Staff are proposing this change due to the number of account holders with multiple NSF payments in one withdrawal. In one case an account holder had over 100 payments NSF.

Charging fees for various finance requests must be done by bylaw to recover at least a portion of the costs related to providing these services. |

OPTIONS

1. That:

1. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” (a bylaw to add fees and charges for the Finance Department) pass first reading.
2. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” pass second reading; and
3. “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13” pass third reading.

Advantages:

- Finance fees are contained within one comprehensive bylaw. The updated fees reflect current pricing and cost recovery.

Disadvantages:

- There are no noted disadvantages to this option.

Financial Implications:

- It is anticipated that this consolidation will have minimal impact on current revenues, as the fees remain largely unchanged except for the administrative reorganization.

2. That Council provide alternative direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Municipal best practice is to have all fees and charges contained in the Fees and Charges Bylaw.
- The proposed amendment to the Fees and Charges Bylaw will reduce the need for separate documentation and ensure that all fees are governed under one comprehensive bylaw.

- Fees from the Waterworks Rate and Regulation Bylaw 2006, No. 7004 have been moved to the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

ATTACHMENTS:

Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2024, No. 7336.13 |

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