

Staff Report

Report To: Corporate Services Committee
Report From: Christine Gilbert, Deputy Treasurer
Meeting Date: May 8, 2025
Report Code: CR-25-055
Subject: 2025 Corporate Services Fees and Charges Update

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-055 respecting 2025 Corporate Services Fees and Charges Update, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- Fees and charges are reviewed annually in the spring, with any changes taking effect July 1.
- New for 2025 and in accordance with Council direction, Standing Committees are reviewing departmental fees and charges before the Council considers them in late May.
- 2025 is a transition year under Service Review project 4c.3, which seeks to standardize and improve the annual fees and charges process.
- User fees and charges will generate approximately 22% of the revenue considered in the City's 2025 operating budget.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

- [CR-25-043 2025 Water Rate and Sewer Surcharge Update](#)
- [Council Resolution R-230612-008](#) to bring Fees and Charges updates to Standing Committees.
- [By-law No. 2024-078 – 2024 Fees and Charges](#)

Background:

In June 2023, Council passed a resolution which directed that the annual fees and charges updates be presented to the applicable Standing Committees, prior to Council approval. This change was implemented to increase transparency and provide additional opportunity for Committee input.

The Corporate Services Committee will review the following fee schedules:

- A. – Animal Control
- D. – Clerks
- F. – Fire and Emergency Services
- G. – Parking & By-law
- K. – Tax, Water, Finance

The revised process aligns with Service Review project 4c.3, which aims to:

- Streamline and improve the efficiency of the annual fees and charges process;
- Standardize the review process and ensure fees accurately reflect the cost of service delivery and opportunities for revenue generation;
- Improve transparency and communication with stakeholders regarding fees;
- Introduce standardized templates that document fee rationale, including total service cost, estimated volumes, comparator fees, and any rationale for fee subsidies;
- Implement a rolling schedule to ensure comprehensive, phased-in fee reviews across all departments;

As part of this update, responsibility for the annual fees and charges review has been realigned to the Finance division, as responsibility was previously under the Clerks division.

As a transitional step, departments were asked to divide their fee schedules into three-year cyclical review cycle, beginning in 2026. This approach ensures every fee is reviewed at least once every three years while also considering staff capacity and allowing for more in-depth review of fees. For 2025, the full annual review model remains in place as has in previous years.

The three-year cycle is intended to establish a minimum review frequency, not a fixed limit. Fees may still be identified by staff or Standing Committees for a more fulsome review at any time due to operational changes, new service offerings, Council direction, or changes in legislative requirements.

Analysis:

The 2025 fee schedules for Corporate Services and Fire Services are attached to this report. For greater clarity while reviewing proposed changes in the fee schedules:

- Any proposed fee additions have been highlighted in green.
- Any proposed fee deletions have been highlighted in red.
- Administrative changes have been redlined.

In addition, a summary of the proposed fees and charges additions and deletions for approval has been provided as an attachment.

A general overview of changes for 2025 are as follows:

Tax, Water and Finance

- Approved water and wastewater rates have been updated as per report CR-25-043 Water Rate and Sewer Surcharge Update.
- Tax sale fee updates include the removal and consolidation of outdated fees and the introduction of more clearly defined staged fees, in order to provide additional clarity, allow for full cost recovery throughout the tax sale process and include best practices from other municipalities.
- Administrative changes including updated notes and fee titles to improve clarity.
- Removal of several fees that were duplicates or no longer relevant.

Fire

- Fire Response Fees – Indemnification Technology fee has been added to support cost recovery from property insurance providers when fire services are used, based on best practices from Fire Marque.

- Court Costs fee has been added to allow for cost recovery if fire personnel are required to attend court in relation to fire incidents.
- Bunker Gear Cleaning fee removed as this is no longer used.

Animal Control, Clerks, Parking and By-law

- No additions, deletions or changes for 2025.

Financial Implications:

User fees and charges (not including water and wastewater rates) are anticipated to generate \$10,685,010 or approximately 22% of the City of Owen Sound's 2025 Operating Budget.

Communication Strategy:

The May 26, 2025 Fees and Charges Council report will communicate recommended fees to Council and the public. Notice will be provided on the City's website that the by-law to adopt the fees will be considered by Council on June 16, 2025.

After adoption, the by-law will be available on the City's website. Additionally, any changes in the fees will be communicated as required by the affected division and in the best method for type of fee, which may include: public notice, posting of rates, communication at the point of sale and other methods.

Consultation:

Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Departmental Staff

Attachments:

1. Summary of Fee Changes – Corporate Services and Fire
2. 2025 Proposed Fee Schedules – Corporate Services and Fire

Recommended by:

Christine Gilbert, Deputy Treasurer

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Christine Gilbert, Deputy Treasurer at cgilbert@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1223.