

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: David Crane, Deputy Treasurer
Meeting Date: April 21, 2026
Report Code: CR-26-039
Subject: 2026 Community Services Fees and Charges Update

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-039 respecting the 2025 Community Services Fees and Charges Update, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- Fees and charges are reviewed annually in the spring, with the new By-law taking effect July 1.
- In accordance with Council direction, each standing committee reviews departmental fees and charges annually before they go to Council for final approval.
- Committee feedback will be considered and incorporated into the final proposed fees and charges schedules presented to Council for approval in May.
- User fees and charges will generate approximately 10% of the revenue considered in the City's 2026 operating budget.

Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Report CR-25-077 Re: Project 4c3 – Process for Annual Fees and Charges](#)

[Report CR-25-072 Re: 2025 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 final Council approval. This increases transparency and provides additional opportunity for Committee input.

The Community Services Committee reviews the following fee schedules:

- B. Building
- C. Cemetery
- H. Parks & Recreation
- I. Planning

In 2025, as part of Service Review Project 4c3, all fee schedules were divided into three annual cyclical review cycles. 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. 2026 is the first year of reviewing fees through the review cycles, as previously, all fees were reviewed each year.

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

Analysis and Options:

The 2026 proposed fee schedules for Community Services are attached to this report (Attachment 1). For clarity while reviewing proposed changes in the fee schedules the following has been highlighted:

- Any proposed fee additions or increases that differ from the standard 3% have been highlighted in green.
- Any proposed fee removals have been highlighted in red.
- Administrative changes to fee titles or notes have been redlined.

Additionally, a summary of changes has been provided as an attachment to this report (Attachment 2) for ease of reference.

Summary of Updates

Schedule B. - Building:

- No major changes. Building fees increase by 5% each year to cover the increased costs of delivering services.

Schedule C. - Cemetery:

- No major changes. Cemetery fees increase by the CPI each year as outlined in the by-law.
- Clarification added related to overtime charges, to note that the fee is charged per half hour of services rendered outside of regular business hours.
- Staff did review the fees for Saturday and Sundays and these fees are sufficient to cover staff overtime costs if necessary.

Schedule H. – Parks & Recreation:

- Most Parks and Recreation fees increase by the CPI each year.
- Fees respecting Special Event Conversions, including glass removals, wooden floor installation/removal, and post-event clean up are increasing approximately 18% in 2026 to more accurately reflect actual 2025 conversion costs, including staff time.
- Addition of a Turf Floor Removal/Installation fee for the new lacrosse turf flooring acquired this year. This fee will be reviewed in 2027 to ensure it aligns with actual conversion costs once experience is gained in undertaking this task.
- Change of the special event merchandise fee from a percentage to a flat fee.
- Addition of Special Event Facility Deposit fee. This fee is used to tentatively hold potential dates for concerts and special events.
- Consolidation of bandshell and gazebo fees into one rental fee for “other” gazebos and approved open park spaces, to keep fees consistent across the smaller park facilities and to provide the ability to charge for other requested outdoor spaces if approved.
- Removal of administrative and booking fees that are no longer relevant or used.

Schedule I. - Planning:

- No changes for 2026. Many of the planning fees scheduled for review in 2026 are not utilized often and will be reviewed alongside additional fees in 2027 for a cohesive approach.

Resource Alignment:

Financial Resources

User fees and charges (not including water and wastewater rates) are anticipated to generate \$5,385,000 or approximately 10% of the City of Owen Sound's 2026 Operating Budget.

Human Resources

Implementation of the three-year cyclical review cycles considers staff capacity by ensuring that no division needs to perform an in-depth review of all departmental fees in a given year.

Staff from each division work with finance staff to review fees annually.

Time and Scheduling

Each of the three Standing Committees will receive a fees and charges review report in April 2026. Following these meetings, any Committee feedback will be incorporated into a final fees and charges report which will be presented to Council for approval in May 2026. The 2026 Fees and Charges By-law will come into effect beginning July 1, 2026.

In future years, the fees and charges review will begin in the fall as part of the operating budget process to ensure that there is sufficient time to perform in-depth cost analysis of services and fees. Additionally, considering fee changes alongside that process will help to inform the operating budget.

Technology and Infrastructure

N/A

Climate and Environmental Impacts:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Communication and Engagement:

The Fees and Charges Council report in May 2026 will communicate final recommended fees to Council and the public. Notice will be provided on the City's website to communicate that the by-law to adopt the 2026 fees and charges will be considered by Council in June 2026, in accordance with the City's Notice By-law.

After adoption, the fees and charges by-law and fee schedules will be available on the City's website. Additionally, any changes to 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.

Report Developed in Consultation With:

Community Services departmental staff.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 – 2026 Proposed Community Services Fee Schedules
2. Attachment 2 – Summary of Changes – Community Services

Reviewed by:

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact David Crane, Deputy Treasurer at dcrane@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1223.