

Report to Council



Date: April 27, 2020
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Temporary Changes to Fees & Payments
Department: Office of the City Clerk

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Office of the City Clerk dated April 27, 2020 recommending that Council adopt the bylaw to implement temporary changes to finance payments;

AND THAT Bylaw No. 12024, being Miscellaneous Financial Operations Temporary Changes Bylaw be forwarded for reading consideration.

Purpose:

To approve temporary changes to utility billing interest charges, returned payment fees, and property tax penalty dates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background:

On April 6, 2020, Council passed a resolution directing staff to bring forward amendments to the Utility Billing Customer Care Bylaw, Miscellaneous Fees and Charges Bylaw, and Property Tax Penalty Bylaw to implement temporary changes to financial operations to support citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion:

The bylaw proposes amendments to the three bylaws to:

- waive interest charges on utility bills from April 27, 2020 to August 31, 2020;
- waive returned payment fees from April 27, 2020 to August 31, 2020; and
- defer the application of the 10% property tax penalty from July 2, 2020 to September 1, 2020.

Note that the property tax penalty for commercial properties identified in the provincial news release dated April 16, 2020 (New COVID-19 supports for businesses, local governments) is extended to October 1, 2020.

Under Ministerial Order No. Mo83 Local Government Meetings and Bylaw Process (COVID-19) Order, staff are recommending that Council give the bylaw all three readings and adopt it on the same day to implement the changes immediately.

Conclusion:

The waived interest charges, fees, and delayed property tax penalty are expected to alleviate some of the financial burden the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the community. Financial impacts to the City are being considered through the upcoming proposed Final Budget, to balance these financial provisions with mind to the continuation of essential services as well as maintenance and support of economic stability through the provision of jobs within the Community.

Internal Circulation:

Financial Services

Considerations applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Ministerial Order No. Mo83 Local Government Meetings and Bylaw Process (COVID-19) Order

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Financial impacts include reductions in the anticipated receipt of the budgeted amount of \$850,000 in property tax penalty revenue, the \$85,000 in Utility Billing interest charges, \$45,000 in Accounts Receivable interest and will need to cover the costs of a portion of the returned cheques \$10,600. The 2020 Final Budget revenues will be lowered to reflect actual anticipated revenues.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by:

L. Bentley, Deputy City Clerk

Approved for inclusion: S. Fleming, City Clerk

cc:

G. Davidson, Divisional Director, Financial Services