

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee
From: Trina Douglas, Manager of Contracted Services

Date: 2020-12-08
File No: 3920-30

Subject: FVRD Animal Control Sub- Regional Regulations Amendment Bylaw No. 1617, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board consider giving three readings and adoption to the bylaw cited as *Fraser Valley Regional District Sub-Regional Animal Control Regulations Amendment Bylaw No. 1617, 2020*.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) *Animal Control Regulation Bylaw No. 1206, 2013*, and its amendments, outlines the regulatory requirements for the control and care of dogs within the City of Abbotsford, the City of Chilliwack, the District of Kent, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, and the District of Mission. An essential component of the animal control program is dog licensing. Licenced dogs require significantly less handling and lodging and helps staff return dogs to their owners quickly. At-large or lost dogs that are wearing a current licence are offered one free ride home per calendar year.

In April 2020, the FVRD Board adopted the *Fraser Valley Regional District Sub-Regional Animal Control Amendment Bylaw No. 1593, 2020*. This amendment included a temporary provision to remove the 25% late fee for those that did not obtain an annual dog licence by the due date. The purpose of this temporary measure was to provide financial relief to dog owners as a result of COVID-19.

DISCUSSION

Within the FVRD, dog licence fees are payable by January 1st of each year for the year ahead. Dog owners who pay their licence fees prior to the deadline or those who obtain a dog after the deadline do not incur late fees. For others, late fees are applied to act as an incentive to pay on time and to help cover the additional administrative costs associated with sending reminder notices and follow-ups.

For 2021 renewals, current dog owners were sent renewal notices during the first week of November, 2020. For dog licence fees that are left outstanding after the deadline, reminder notices will be mailed

out in the first quarter of 2021. With penalty fees applied in Chilliwack, for example, where an annual dog licence costs \$20, the penalty fee would represent an additional \$5.00.

For licence accounts that remain outstanding after the reminder notices are sent, staff provide additional follow up through telephone, in person, or by email advising dog owners that they will receive additional fines if they do not licence their dog. For dog owners that are still in contravention of the licencing requirements, fines are issued.

To impose a fee or charge payable for a regional district service, the *Local Government Act* requires that the fee or charge must be established and amended by bylaw. Staff are recommending that the draft bylaw (attached) be adopted to re-apply the 25% late penalty fee which was removed early in 2020 to serve as financial relief during the initial wave of COVID-19.

COST

The FVRD's sub-regional animal control service relies on dog licence fees as part of its revenue stream. The 2021 budget includes \$615,000 in total licencing fees. 2020 licence revenue at the time of writing this memo is down approximately \$30,000 when compared to 2019 revenues. This reduction in revenue was expected in response to the removal of the late penalty.

CONCLUSION

COVID 19 is still active in our communities; however, dog owners who comply with licencing by the deadline would not be impacted by penalty fees. Penalty fees would only apply to dog owners who do not comply with licencing when required.

COMMENTS BY:

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Kelly Lownsbrough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Finance: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.