

Animal Protection Act Enforcement Services - Service Package

Recommendation

That Community and Public Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That Administration prepare an unfunded service package, based on option three, as outlined in the August 21, 2019, Citizen Services report CR_7213, for consideration by Council during the 2019 Fall Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment deliberations.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 30/May 1, 2019, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

1. That the Community Standards and Neighbourhoods branch budget be increased by \$230,000 in 2019, on a one-time basis, to fund the *Animal Protection Act* Enforcement Services service package, with funding from the Financial Stabilization Reserve and returned to the Financial Stabilization Reserve over the four-year budget period.
2. That Administration bring a report to Committee with other funding source options for ongoing support of the service package.

Executive Summary

On February 1, 2019, the Edmonton Humane Society discontinued enforcement of the *Animal Protection Act* and Administration began addressing complaints and enforcement under the *Act*. Temporary funding for 2019 was approved through a combination of approaches including reallocation of internal resources, grant reductions, and supplemental funding from the Financial Stabilization Reserve. Administration has outlined three ongoing funding source options for consideration including increasing pet licence fees, increasing the tax levy, or a combination of both approaches.

Report

On February 1, 2019, the City of Edmonton began to respond to animal welfare complaints and enforcement requests as a result of the Edmonton Humane Society's decision to discontinue *Animal Protection Act* enforcement services. Between February 1 and June 30, 2019, the City has received 2,430 *Animal Protection*

Act-related inquiries. Animal control peace officers have conducted 876 investigations, including two search warrants, resulting in 251 animals being housed at the Animal Care and Control Centre.

Based on the first six months of running the program, Administration anticipates the total annual cost of the program will be approximately \$800,000, which includes four animal control peace officers as well as 2.4 full-time equivalent positions covering services such as veterinary services and medical care, health technicians, dispatch, 311, and legal support services.

To meet the enforcement demands associated with the program, three peace officers who had been allocated to cannabis enforcement were reallocated, totalling \$360,000. An additional \$184,000 was funded through a reduction in the City's annual operating grant to the Edmonton Humane Society.

In March 2019, City Council directed Administration to prepare a service package based on an operating model, which combined the previous Edmonton Humane Society approach and learnings from Calgary and Winnipeg (March 12, 2019, Citizen Services report CR_6878 Animal Protection Enforcement Services Service Package - Business Model Options). The service package was brought to the Spring 2019 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment in April 2019, and City Council approved one-time funding of \$230,000 for the remainder of 2019.

Administration requires an additional \$250,000 in ongoing funding to cover the anticipated annual cost of \$800,000, beginning in 2020. Funding options for the additional request are outlined below.

Option One - Increase Pet Licensing Fees

Currently, there are almost 97,000 pets licensed in Edmonton. A \$1 increase in the pet licence fee would generate approximately \$100,000 in revenue. As an example fee structure, in order to obtain the \$250,000 in unfunded program costs, a \$2.50 licence fee could be applied.

Licence Category	Current Annual Licence Fee	\$2.50 Increase
Cat - Spayed/neutered	\$21.00	\$23.50
Cat - Unaltered	\$76.00	\$78.50
Dog - Spayed/neutered	\$36.00	\$38.50
Dog - Unaltered	\$76.00	\$78.50

Guide / Service Dogs	Free	Free
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By increasing licence fees, it is possible that fewer pet owners would adhere to Bylaw 13145 - Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw (i.e. they will choose not to purchase a licence for their pet). Increasing licence fees is an approach that relies heavily on responsible pet owners to shoulder the cost of a city-wide *Animal Protection Act* enforcement program.

Option Two - Prepare a Service Package for City Council's Consideration

Use of the tax levy shifts the responsibility of animal welfare to the broader community. In order to fully fund the additional *Animal Protection Act* enforcement costs of \$250,000, an increase of approximately 0.015 percent ongoing to the tax levy would be required.

Option Three - Combination: Increase Pet Licensing Fees and Service Package

Another option is to fund the enforcement of the *Animal Protection Act* through a marginal increase to pet licensing fees with partial funding through tax levy. This option places a portion of the financial responsibility on pet owners, supporting the notion of responsible pet ownership. The remaining funding would be allocated through the tax levy as a city-wide service provided for citizens and their communities.

Legal Implications

In order to increase pet licensing fees, an amendment to Bylaw 13145 - Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw would be required.

Public Engagement

Public Engagement was not conducted for this report.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play.			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Growth in annual cat and dog licences issued keeps pace with population growth	Number of cat and dog licences issued	2017 - 101,671 2018 - 101,190	Growth in cat and dog licences issued in line with population growth
Resolution of <i>Animal Protection Act</i> cases	Total number of <i>Animal Protection Act</i> cases investigated and completed	<u>February 1 - June 30, 2019</u> 486 cases completed (55.5%) 876 cases investigated	Increase efficiency and effectiveness in resolution of cases

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
If recommendation is approved						
Public Perception	The public may not be supportive of raising the tax levy and/or licencing fees	3 - Possible	1 - Minor	3 - Low	Internal reallocation of resources	
If recommendation is not approved						
Service / Professional Liability	Animals in distress calls are not investigated in a timely manner	4 - Likely	3 - Major	12 - Medium	Calls are addressed on an ad-hoc basis within current resources City mandated calls for service are deferred or delayed due to prioritization	Meet with the provincial government and other stakeholders to determine a strategy for enforcement of the Animal Protection Act in the city.
Customers / Citizens	Increasing demand from citizens for Administration to carry out enforcement of Animal Protection Act	3 - Possible	3 - Major	9- Medium	Calls are addressed on an ad-hoc basis within current resources City mandated calls for service are deferred or delayed due to prioritization	Calls could be redirected to other first responders

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- A. Laughlin, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor