



## The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Legislative & Clerk Services

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Jennifer Alexander, Acting Clerk  
**Date to Council:** December 13, 2022  
**Report Number:** LCS-2022-42  
**Subject:** Animal Services

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### Recommendations

It is recommended:

**That** Report LCS-2022-39 entitled “Animal Services” **be received**;

**And that** The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh **enter** into an Agreement with the Windsor Essex County Humane Society for the provision of cat intake and spay/neuter services, at an annual cost to the Town of \$7,500, and DocuPet Inc. for the provision of dog tag licensing, at an annual cost to the Town of \$4.00 per tag, in advance of the 2023 budget deliberations due to the timing of service renewal;

**And further that** the Clerk **be authorized** to execute an Agreement between the Town and Windsor Essex County Humane Society, for a one year term commencing January 1, 2023 and concluding December 31, 2023;

**And furthermore, that** the Clerk **be authorized** to execute an Agreement between the Town and DocuPet Inc., for a three-year term commencing January 1, 2023 and concluding December 31, 2025.

## **Background**

### **Cat Intake Program**

The Cat Intake Program with the Windsor Essex County Humane Society (WECHS) allows residents to drop off stray cats to the WECHS at a historical cost to the Town of \$25 for each cat.

The Agreement with the WECHS for the Cat Intake Program has been in place since 2010 and was originally entered into following concerns expressed by Town residents regarding cats entering onto property other than that of their owners. The Agreement with the WECHS has been renewed each year since and is set to expire on December 31, 2022.

Upon drop off, the WECHS examines the stray cats for their disposition, and treats if medically necessary. Healthy and friendly stray cats are adoptable; stray cats that appear to be community cats are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped and returned to the field where trapped to live out their lives without producing any more kittens.

### **Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Program**

In 2014, the Town launched the Cat Spay and Neuter Voucher Program as an additional opportunity to alleviate cat overpopulation in Tecumseh.

The vouchers, approved for 95 vouchers with a value of \$50 each, are allocated annually for the spay or neuter of feral cats to a maximum of five (5) vouchers per caregiver of feral cats, and owned cats to a maximum of three (3) vouchers available for low-income families.

Vouchers are made available to Tecumseh residents on a first come, first served basis. Caregivers and families of feral cats and owned cats are required to complete an electronic application form and provide proof that they are at least 18 years of age and their primary residence, for at least one year, is in the Town. Application forms and eligibility for low-income vouchers require proof that a family household's before-tax income cannot exceed the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs.

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) requires that vouchers not be restricted for use at veterinarians within a particular boundary and as such, the vouchers can be used anywhere in Essex County. Correspondence is sent annually to all veterinary hospitals in Windsor and Essex County, as required by the CVO, to inquire of their interest to participate in the current year's Program.

All costs and fees for surgeries over and above the \$50 voucher value are the responsibility of the individual seeking service. The Town provides reimbursement of the

\$50 (inclusive of HST) per surgery to participating veterinary hospitals, upon receipt of an invoice and the signed voucher.

## **Dog Tag Licensing Program**

In accordance with the Town's Dog Control By-law No. 2003-91, as amended, every dog owner must make application, annually, to obtain a dog licence(s) and tag(s) for each dog owned. The dog tag forms an important method of identifying a dog to ensure their safe return should it be found running at large, or found and reported by a neighbour. The Dog Tag Licensing Program is a protective initiative intended to offset the costs associated with regulating and controlling dogs running at large, providing a dog catcher and maintaining the Dog Pound.

In 2021, the Town introduced a more convenient online option to renew or purchase a dog tag. The Dog Licence Renewal Application was made available on the Town's website to be completed and submitted electronically, along with the licence fee. Payment is processed using either Visa or Mastercard.

## **Comments**

### **Cat Intake and Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Programs (Cat Programs)**

The Clerk's Service Delivery Review (Review), conducted by WSCS Consulting earlier this year, recommended the Legislative and Clerks Services Department focus on core functions of legal and clerk services. The Review examined the Town's animal licensing programs and found a significant amount of staff time is spent managing and issuing dog licenses and Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Program. Many municipalities are now outsourcing their licensing programs very successfully and are seeing increased uptake and revenues.

Both Cat Programs offered by the Town have proven to be very successful and received positive participation from residents. However, as the Review highlighted, the programs are time consuming and impacting staff's time to focus on core department services.

Accordingly, the Review recommended outsourcing the Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Program to the WECHS, along with the Cat Intake Program as a community grant program, as opposed to the current cumbersome reconciliation process.

Administration has engaged with WECHS to explore a partnership opportunity to offer both Cat Programs on the Town's behalf. WECHS is desirous and able to offer both services to Tecumseh residents, at an annual cost to the Town of \$7,500. This partnership would provide the same level of service to Tecumseh residents while alleviating the level of staff time for administrative support of both programs. WECHS

also has a greater community outreach which may help to assist a greater number of low-income households.

Administration will monitor the inaugural partnership with WECHS to provide both Cat Programs and a report out will be provided to Council prior to the end of the proposed 2023 Agreement term.

## **Dog Tag Licensing Program**

As previously recommended and approved in the Information Technology Services Review (ITSR), completed by Perry Group Consultants in 2021, the Clerk's Review also recommended outsourcing dog licensing service to an external provider to alleviate the staff burden and increase revenues.

By way of an update, Administration is currently engaging the services of DocuPet Inc. (DocuPet) to provide dog licensing services starting in 2023. Their approach to pet licensing is founded on delivering value to the pet owner in such a way that makes the licensing process simple and rewarding via a secure online software pet licensing service with an easy step-by-step process for residents to purchase or renew their dog tag(s). Each dog tag is linked to that pet's secure online profile which includes a unique identification number to help reunite a lost dog. A dog tag(s) is mailed to the dog owner upon purchase and retains the same physical tag for the lifetime of the dog with each annual renewal. The service helps to streamline and automate administrative efforts involved including scheduled email renewal communications, dog tag fulfillment and accessible data tools.

DocuPet's software also provides for 365 licensing which allows the resident to renew based on the calendar date (i.e., purchase tag on February 1, renew the following February 1). This model has shown to be more effective and equitable for those who may acquire a dog later in the year and/or move into the municipality past the traditional 'early bird' deadline. The start up fee of \$4,999 is also waived by implementing the 365 licensing.

Detailed communication to residents will be forthcoming as Administration anticipates launching the Dog Tag Licensing Program with DocuPet in spring 2023. In collaboration with the Town's Communication division and DocuPet's marketing materials and website, residents will receive clear information and guidance regarding the online registration process and lost pet services.

Reporting capabilities are provided by DocuPet which will allow Administration to receive detailed insights on program performance and revenues, as well as effectively monitor the program.

## Consultations

Technology & Client Services  
Windsor Essex County Humane Society  
DocuPet Inc.

## Financial Implications

Historically, the Animal Control Budget has allocated funds for both the Cat Intake Program and Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Program. Funding in the amount of \$6,250 was provided in the 2022 Budget for the Cat Intake Program (\$1,500) and Cat Spay & Neuter Voucher Program (\$4,750).

Funding for WECHS's annual fee of \$7,500 for the proposed cat program partnership has been allocated in the draft 2023 Animal Control budget.

To reflect rising cost of inflation and costs associated with the Dog Tag Licensing Program, the cost of a dog tag will be increased from \$20.00 to \$22.00 per tag. Under the DocuPet service, dog owners will be receiving additional benefits such as the customized dog tag with unique identification number and lost pet service. As well, the Town's current 'early bird' before March 31st fee structure will be eliminated and tags purchased within the 365 program will be at the flat rate cost of \$22.00 per tag.

Funding for the provision of dog tag licensing, at an annual cost to the Town of \$4.00 per tag, plus applicable credit card transaction fee, has also been allocated in the draft 2023 Animal Control budget.

Based on the Town's average sale of approximately 1200 dog tags yearly, it is anticipated that the cost for DocuPet's service will be \$4,800 [1200 dog tags sold annually x \$4.00 fee per tag], plus applicable credit card transaction fee (approximately \$0.94/tag). The projected revenue, less DocuPet's standard fees, is approximately \$20,472 [1200 dog tags x \$22.00/tag minus the standard fees]. Current revenue collected in 2022 is \$24,420. This revenue does not account for staff time associated with administering the dog-tag program. With DocuPet, staff involvement will be limited to contract administration.

Entering into an agreement with DocuPet before December 31st will secure the current standard fee of \$4.00 per tag for the term of the agreement. As noted, the start up fee of \$4,999 is also waived by implementing the 365 licensing.

The Town will receive the monthly revenue, less the standard dog tag fee collected by DocuPet, to offset the costs associated with regulating and controlling dogs running at large, providing a dog catcher and maintaining the Dog Pound.

Council's advance approval of this budget allocation in advance of general operating budget deliberations is requested due to the timing of this required service renewal. In a

normal budget year, budget deliberations would occur in December, however, during an election year, it is our practice to extend budget deliberations to January. As the current cat intake agreement expires at the end of December and in order to implement DocuPet's services for 2023, Administration is seeking advance approval to ensure seamless animal services in the Town.

## Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

## Communications

Not applicable

Website

Social Media

News Release

Local Newspaper

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Christina Hebert, BA (Hons), MA, Dipl. M.A.  
Deputy Clerk – Clerks Services & Policy Advisor

Reviewed by:

Jennifer Alexander, MPA  
Deputy Clerk & Manager Legislative Services

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Attachment Number</b>	<b>Attachment Name</b>
None	None