



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Margaret Misek-Evans, Chief Administrative Officer

Date to Council: December 10, 2024

Report Number: CAO-2024-09

Subject: Alarm Registration and False Alarm Fees

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report CAO-2024-09 entitled "Alarm Registration and False Alarm Fees" **be received**;

And that Council **deliberate** on the options outlined in this report regarding the proposed fee structure change for false alarm calls to Police Services;

And further that direction **be given** at the January 14, 2025 Budget Deliberation meeting on the preferred option outlined in this report regarding the fee structure.

Background

Section 391 (1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, permits a municipality to pass by-laws imposing fees and charges as follows:

"391 (1) Without limiting sections 9, 10 and 11, those sections authorize a municipality to impose fees or charges on persons,

(a) for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of it;

(b) for costs payable by it for services or activities provided or done by or on behalf of any other municipality or any local board; and

(c) for the use of its property including property under its control. 2006, c. 32, Sched. A, s. 163 (1).

Accordingly, By-Law 2019-75 prescribes administrative fees and charges for the services and activities provided by the Town of Tecumseh's Fire & Rescue Services related to the registration of fire alarm systems for residential and commercial property owners and to impose a fee for at fault false alarms. ([Attachment 1](#)) The Town's annual Administrative Fees & Charges By-Law also includes these administrative fees and charges for alarm registration and at fault false alarms for Fire Services.

Tecumseh Police Services Board By-Law 2000-01 imposes fees and charges for services of activities provided by the Ontario Provincial Police, Tecumseh Detachment on behalf of the Town. ([Attachment 2](#))

This report centres on the current alarm registration and false alarm provisions and the existing fee structure for same.

Comments

Alarm Registration Fee

Annually, residential and commercial properties can register all security and fire alarms for a fee. The current rate under the Administrative Fees & Charges By-Law 2023-115 for 2024 is \$32.00.

Concurrent to this report, Council will be considering the administrative fees and charges for 2025 which provides for an increase in fees and charges annually reflective of the previous year's Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase. The proposed alarm registration fee for 2025 is \$35.00.

Residents and commercial owners receive notification annually to register their alarm and can do so via the Town's website or in-person at Town Hall.

False Alarm Charge

Once registered, Police Services and Fire Services will each respond to two (2) at fault false alarms to any **registered** premises with an alarm during each calendar year without charge to the premises. Charges for a **third or any subsequent** at fault false alarms or if the premises is **unregistered**, are as follows:

- Responding to Police Services alarm - \$100 per call
- Responding to Fire Services alarm - fees based on current Ministry of Transportation (MTO) response rates with respect to Fire Services per apparatus per hour (minimum 1 hour).

[Note: 2024 rate established by the MTO is \$559.86 and is subject to annual increases based on CPI]

- The owner or occupier of a Registered Premise must attend their premises within 30 minutes of an activated fire alarm. Failure to attend within 30 minutes of a fire alarm will result in a charge using the Ministry of Transportation rate.

As noted, the fee for at fault false alarms for Fire Services is set in accordance with MTO rates and increased annually in line with CPI. This administrative fee is also identified in the annual Administrative Fees & Charges By-Law.

However, the fee for at fault false alarms for Police Services is only addressed in the Tecumseh Police Services Board By-Law 2000-01, which is currently set at a rate of \$100 per call (for third/subsequent calls or unregistered premises).

As Council is aware, on March 26, 2019, Ontario passed the [*Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*](#) (CSPA), as part of the *Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019*. Effective April 1, 2024, the CSPA replaced the *Police Services Act, 1990* (PSA) and the Police Services Board was discontinued in favour of the new Detachment Boards formed under the CSPA. As such, the Tecumseh Police Services Board By-Law 2000-01 will be repealed.

Moreover, the rate set within the by-law for responding to Police Services was established over 24 years ago. In actuality, the current (2023) fee for service by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in responding to calls for service is approximately \$382 per call.

In 2023, the Town collected \$13,301.21 in false alarm charges for Police Services. At the established rate of \$100 per call, this equates to approximately 133 (\$13,301.21 divided by \$100) calls for service by the OPP. The Town was billed at the OPP's current call for service rate of \$382, for an estimated total of \$50,806 (133 calls for service x \$382). This amounts to an estimated deficit of \$37,505 for false alarm responses by Police Services. This deficit does not capture the Town's overhead costs and staff time to oversee the administrative components of the program, nor does this reflect the first two (2) at fault false alarms to any registered premises without charge.

To note, approximately twenty (20) unregistered and two (2) registered commercial properties have had multiple calls for service for false alarms in 2024.

In light of the above fee for service analysis, the following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. Maintain the status quo but commence indexing the annual fees in accordance with the CPI.

2. Maintain the established rate of \$100 per call for Police Services and remove two (2) at fault false alarms to any registered premises with an alarm during each calendar year without charge to the premises. Registered and unregistered premises would be charged at \$100 per call from first occurrence, i.e., no forgiveness.
3. Increase the rate to \$200 per call for Police Services and maintain the two (2) at fault false alarms to any registered premises with an alarm during each calendar year without charge to the premises. Unregistered premises would be charged at \$200 per call from first occurrence.
4. Increase the rate to \$375 per call for Police Services for greater cost recovery and maintain the two (2) at fault false alarms to any registered premises with an alarm during each calendar year without charge to the premises. Unregistered premises would be charged at \$375 per call from first occurrence.

Additionally, for Options 2 to 4, it is recommended that the fees be subject to annual adjustment in accordance with the CPI.

Administration, with each of the proposed options, will continue to monitor and evaluate the program against the billable calls for service by the OPP.

It is recommended that Council deliberate on the options presented in this report regarding the proposed fee structure change and provide direction to Administration at the January 14, 2025 Budget Deliberation meeting on the preferred option for same.

Following Council's direction, an amendment to the 2025 Administrative Fees & Charges By-Law reflecting the selected false alarm fee structure for Police Services will be brought to Council for consideration of approval and to repeal any by-law inconsistent with the Administrative Fees & Charges By-Law.

Consultations

Financial Services
Legislative Services & Clerk
Ontario Provincial Police

Financial Implications

The alarm registration fee for security and fire alarms is collected in one combined fee (\$32 in 2024; \$35 proposed for 2025). This fee revenue is split equally between the Police Services and Fire Service budgets.

The fee structure for responding to false alarm calls by the OPP was established by the Tecumseh Police Services Board nearly 24 years ago and has been in place since then,

without change. As outlined in this report, the cost recovery to the Policing budget for these calls is conservatively estimated to be in the order of 26 percent of the amount the Town is billed, using data and rates from 2023.

Adjustments to the fee structure outlined in this report will enhance the Town's cost recovery for false alarm calls, particularly Options 3 and 4.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2023-2026 Strategic Priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Growth: Achieve prosperity and a livable community through sustainable growth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Health and Inclusion: Integrate community health and inclusion into our places and spaces and everything we do.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Service Experience: Enhance the experience of Team Tecumseh and our citizens through responsive and respectful service.

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:

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Deputy Clerk – Clerks Services & Policy Advisor

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Fire Alarms By-Law 2019-75
2	Tecumseh Police Services Board By-Law 2000-01