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Item No. 1
Halifax Regional Council
September 10, 2013

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY:

Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: August 23, 2013

SUBJECT: Administrative Order Number 20, Respecting Fees for Cemetery Services

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council - July 23, 2013 - Item 11.1.8 - Amendments to Cemeteries By-law & Administrative Order Number 20.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter including clauses: 61(5) (d), 188(1) (c), (f), (ka), and 188 (2) (b).

BACKGROUND

At the July 23, 2013 session of Regional Council, the following motion was approved during item 11.1.8 "First Reading, By-law Respecting an Amendment to the Cemeteries By-law and Amendments to Administrative Order Number 20 (Cemeteries)", following First Reading:

MOVED by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Walker, that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to review cemetery fees as outlined in Administrative Order 20, Respecting Fees for Cemetery Services, in particular Section 3 Additional Fees subsections (i) Weekend/Holiday rate and (j) Burials after 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

DISCUSSION

In 2008 an amendment was approved by Regional Council to adjust Administrative Order Number 20 to include an overtime rate for burials which were held Monday to Friday after 4:00 pm, and one for burials held on weekends and holidays. These rates were necessary because at the time Cemetery Operations were undergoing a staffing review that eventually saw the Cemetery Attendants moved to other divisions in an effort to more efficiently allocate work. The two staff that remained with Cemetery Operations worked a regularly scheduled shift from Monday to Friday and if a weekend or holiday burial was scheduled, then overtime was paid in accordance with the CUPE Collective Agreement. The Cemeterian (or Supervisor) was required to be on site for all interments and overtime was reimbursed in accordance with the NSUPE Collective Agreement. The increased rate was therefore put in effect to cover the overtime expenses for the staff and the Cemeterian.

At present, HRM engages a contractor to prepare our interments and ensures one HRM employee is present to provide oversight. When a casket or cremation interment occurs after work hours or on a weekend, HRM staff, in accordance with the respective Collective Agreements, is reimbursed a minimum four-hour call in.

In accordance with Administrative Order 20, the actual additional overtime costs are calculated at \$150 plus tax for a Monday to Friday after 4:00 pm interment, and \$500 plus tax for a Saturday, Sunday and holiday interment. These costs are in addition to the burial costs which are for a cremation burial, first opening, \$460 (including taxes) and for a second opening, \$632.50 (including taxes). For a traditional casket burial the cost is \$902.75 (including taxes).

There are no real industry standards due primarily to the fact that some cemeteries have full time staff over the weekends, some have non-unionized staff so do not reimburse overtime rates while still others pay a salary rate and flex employee time in order to cover late or weekend requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implication of eliminating an overtime charge for weekday, after hour and weekend or holiday burials would mean that Cemetery Operations would incur a loss each time they provided this service.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement was not deemed necessary as this report is only providing information to Council.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Bonnie Murphy, Cemetery Administrator, 490-6236

Original Signed

Report Approved by: _____
Chris Mitchell, Manager, Municipal Operations, 490-4673
