

# Report

**City of Merritt**  
**REGULAR Council Meeting**  
**June 30, 2020**

**File Number: 3900.2176**

**To:** Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** Sean Smith, Director of Corporate Services  
**Date:** June 22, 2020  
**Subject:** Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw – Cemetery and RCMP Admin Fees

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT Council give first reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020**

**And**

**THAT Council give second reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020**

**And**

**THAT Council give third reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020**

**Background:**

**Cemetery Columbarium Niche Amendments**

On October 9, 2018, Council adopted a new Cemetery Bylaw and a Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw, which were necessary to facilitate the installation of a new columbarium at the Pine Ridge Cemetery. The fees set out in the Fees and Charges Bylaw were only estimates, as the columbarium had not yet been ordered and specific costs were not known.

Figure 1: Columbarium at Pine Ridge Cemetery



Now that the columbarium has been ordered and installed, staff have more accurate recommendations for Council regarding pricing. Best practices for cemetery management state that the cost of a columbarium should be recovered through the sale of the first 50% of the niches. The cost of the columbarium, excluding the concrete base (\$600.00) and landscaping (not yet complete), was \$34,360.00. Applying the 50% guideline to our 40-niche columbarium, staff recommends the following fee structure:

<b>Columbarium Niche</b> (including Care Fund Contribution of 10%)	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>
Top Row (12" x 12" x 16")	\$ 1,925.00	\$ 2,310.00
Middle Row (12" x 12" x 16")	\$ 1,760.00	\$ 2,112.00
Bottom Row (12" x 12" x 16")	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 1,980.00
Base Row (12" x 12" x 27")	\$ 2,585.00	\$ 3,102.00

Pricing reflects the general consumer preference for upper rows in columbaria. Base row pricing is also higher as the niches are larger and capable of holding four instead of two sets of cremains.

Since all cemetery costs not covered by fees are borne by City taxpayers generally, staff recommends that Council implement the proposed 20% premium for non-residents.

Funds received from the sale of niches could go towards purchasing the next columbarium or towards the much-needed expansion of the cemetery as set out in the City's Cemetery master plan.

## RCMP Administration Fees

Municipal employees at the Merritt RCMP detachment provide a wide variety of services, ranging from fingerprinting to conducting police information checks and transcription. Historically, the majority of fees collected for RCMP administrative services have been remitted to the Receiver General for Canada.

However, as these services are being performed by municipal employees, by bylaw, the fees charged can be set by the City of Merritt and remitted to the City, as is done in many other municipalities across BC (see appendix 1 for RCMP administrative fees from Kamloops and a sampling of other communities with similar detachment volumes)

As a starting point, staff is recommending fees that are generally similar or slightly lower than what is currently being charged by the City of Kamloops. Fees charged in lower mainland communities tend to be higher than what is proposed, while fees charged in more northern communities (Prince George, Quesnel, Prince Rupert) tend to be lower than what is proposed).

From conversations with City staff and the RCMP, we anticipate that this amendment will result in between \$25,000 - \$35,000 of additional revenue for the City each year.

Credit for identifying this anomaly goes to the dedicated City staff working at the Merritt RCMP detachment, as well as our new detachment leadership.

## Options / discussion

1. THAT Council give three readings to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020.
2. THAT Council give first reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020, and make any amendments to fees that Council sees fit prior to giving the bylaw second and third reading.
3. THAT Council direct staff to provide further information prior to advancing Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw 2285, 2020.

## Financial / Risk Implications:

The primary consideration when setting niche fees is the degree to which the niches should be subsidized by the public vs. users of the columbarium. There are maintenance and administrative costs that aren't captured by the cost of the columbarium alone, which is why staff is recommending pricing the niches to recover the cost of the columbarium by the time 50% of niches are sold.

RCMP Administration Fees are already being charged, so the only implication for this portion of the amendment is that it will allow funds currently being remitted to the Receiver General to be used to benefit residents of the City of Merritt and offset the cost of providing policing services.

**Attachments:**

- Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 2285, 2020
- Appendix 1: RCMP Administrative Charges from Kamloops, Kent, Mission, Whiterock and Sechelt
- Appendix 2: City of Merritt Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 2176, 2015

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Sean Smith**  
**Deputy CAO/Director of Corporate Services**