



Financial - Accounting

Title: Fire Services Fee Policy	Policy Number: FI-013
Objective: To outline the recovery of direct fire response costs for Residential and Agriculture properties through an annual fire service fee.	
Authority: February 24, 2026, Resolution 2026-02-054	

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Municipality will fund Residential and Agriculture fire protection through a fire service fee charged annually per unique owner. Commercial and Industrial properties will continue with incident-based invoicing, with no maximum charge per incident.

2. PURPOSE

To establish a fair, predictable, and transparent framework to recover the direct costs of providing firefighting and related emergency response services, while simplifying administration and ensuring sustainable funding for municipal fire protection.

3. AUTHORITY

This Policy is enacted by Council resolution and administered by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

4. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all properties within the municipality’s boundaries and to all owners of record as defined by the municipal assessment roll and land titles data.

5. DEFINITIONS

- *“Direct Fire Response Costs”* - Fees and charges invoiced to the Municipality by contracted or mutual-aid fire departments for response, apparatus, personnel, consumables, specialized equipment, and third-party services directly attributable to an incident.
- *“Incident”* - A dispatched response by a contracted or mutual-aid fire department to a fire, medical incident, explosion, hazardous materials event, rescue, or related emergency on or originating from a property.
- *“Nuisance calls”* – Means a request for fire department response where no emergency is present and the response is triggered by avoidable, negligent, or improper causes. This includes false or repeated alarms from faulty or poorly maintained systems, misuse or tampering with fire protection equipment, non-

emergency situations better handled by another service, and preventable alarms caused by dust, cooking smoke, steam, or similar conditions where reasonable precautions were not taken.

- “Owner” - A person(s) or legal entity as registered on the land title.
- “Property Classes”
 - Residential: Parcels assessed as residential use.
 - Agriculture: Parcels assessed as agricultural use, including cultivated land and pasture.
 - Commercial: Parcels assessed as commercial or industrial use.
- “Unique Property Owner” – Person(s) or entity who owns one or more properties within the Municipality. Each unique owner has a distinct Client Code, which is the basis for which the Fire Service Fee is applied.
- “Unregistered Control Burns” – A fire event that has not been properly registered with the Provincial Control Burn Line. If a controlled burn is not properly registered and a call is reported from a passerby, municipal fire crews will respond to the incident.

6. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Each unique property owner that owns one or more Residential and/or Agriculture properties in the Municipality will be charged an annual fire service fee. This fee will be added as a separate line item on the annual tax/levy notice.

Where multiple ownership structures exist, Finance will apply reasonable, consistent rules to ensure a single charge per Owner. Council will set the fire services fee annually as part of the property tax mill rate discussion.

The annual service fee applies only to direct fire response costs.

7. EXCLUSIONS

- Commercial properties will to be charged per incident for the full direct fire response costs attributable to the property/incident with no maximum cap. The invoice will be issued to the commercial property owner (or occupant under a lease where applicable) based on incident reports and invoices from responding fire services.
- The municipality will bill both residential/agricultural and commercial property owners for direct fire response costs that pertain to nuisance calls or unregistered controlled burns. No maximum cap applies.
- Intentional acts, bylaw contraventions, or negligence may be subject to additional cost recovery and enforcement under applicable bylaws and statutes.

8. RESERVES AND ACCOUNTING

- Annual fire service fee revenue is recognized against current-year firefighting expenses.
- Reserve: Any surplus is transferred to the fire services reserve (target balance of \$600,000) to provide rate stability in higher-cost years. Any shortfall may be offset from the reserve subject to Council approval.

9. NON-PAYMENT AND COLLECTIONS

Unpaid amounts are subject to the Municipality's standard arrears, interest, and collection processes, up to and including tax roll addition where lawful and applicable.

10. MUTUAL AID AND CONTRACTED SERVICES

The Municipality will continue to rely on existing fire protection and mutual aid agreements to deliver services; invoices from responding departments form the basis for cost recovery under this Policy.

11. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVIEW

- Effective as of January 1, 2026.

Reviewed every three (3) years by the Administration Committee.



Kerry Hilts, Chief Administrative Officer



Feb 27 / 2026

Date