

Topic: False Alarm Bylaw**Introduction**

Council has requested administration bring forward a False Alarm Bylaw. This bylaw will authorize Parkland County to enact a service fee for Fire Services' response to false fire alarm incidents. The service fee shall be listed in a schedule in the Fees and Charges Bylaw which will be presented as part of the budget process.

The bylaw, as presented, will:

- Provide a means for recovering the financial impact incurred upon Parkland County by false fire alarms,
- Penalize those businesses who are not adhering to their responsibilities to the Safety Code Act and the Alberta Fire Code,
- Does not penalize alarm holders when an alarm activates during a true emergency,
- Provide motivation to ensure that alarm systems are inspected, maintained and function correctly.
- Reduce the number of false alarms that occur annually.
- Maintains a balanced approach in application of fees for false alarms.

Facts (Background Information)

During a Fire Service Master Plan presentation on August 23rd 2016 to Council, it was identified that Fire Services should develop a bylaw to address nuisance false alarms.

On the 4th of October 2016, administration conducted a presentation to Committee of the Whole on the impact that false fire alarm incidents has on Parkland County. False alarms make up on average 25% of the total emergencies that Fire Services deals with each year. These incidents are increasing annually which is creating further demand on emergency resources to respond for false alarms. After the presentation, the Committee directed administration to present a Fire Alarm Prevention Bylaw to Council.

As of the 3rd of November, Fire Services has responded 164 false alarm calls this year, which is estimated to have cost the County \$73,964.00.* Based on a monthly average, Fire Services is on pace to reach 196 false alarm calls this year, a 9% increase from 2015, with an estimated cost of \$88,396.00*.

In 2015, Fire Services has responded 177 false alarm calls this year, with an estimated cost the County \$79,827.*

**This number is derived from eight (8) firefighters [2015 average], at an average fire service staff wage at a minimum two hour call out.*

Analysis

In administration's review of comparative municipality's practices to reduce or prevent false fire alarm incidents, it was discovered that nearly all those investigated had provisions within a municipal bylaw to recover the costs incurred from

these types of incidents. In the Capital Region, the Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County are the only two larger municipalities that do not currently bill for this type of service.

The 2016 Fire Service Master Plan recommends in goal:

“H1.1 - Within three years, bring forward recommendation to council to implement fees for all services provided by the fire service”

Alternatives

1. Remain Status Quo with no service fee for response to false alarms incidents.

Conclusion/Summary

Administration supports that False Alarm Bylaw receives first reading.

Administration supports that False Alarm Bylaw receives second reading.

Administration supports that False Alarm Bylaw receives third and final reading.

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Date Written: 08 November 2016
