



## COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: February 3, 2025

From: Ron Bowles, CAO

Subject: **West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw**

Report Prepared by: Mark Roberts, Parks Manager

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**RECOMMENDATION** to Consider and Resolve:

**THAT** Council give first, second and third reading to the *West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw No. 318*;

**AND THAT** Council authorize staff to include the increased revenues and requested FTE's into the 2025 Financial Plan.

### **STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS**

**Invest in Infrastructure** – We will invest in building, improving and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

### **BACKGROUND**

On September 10, 2024, Council was presented with an Information Only Report from staff outlining the challenges faced in the Cemetery currently, including:

- Death rate is anticipated to increase in the coming years
- Increasing number of sales and burials
- Projected inventory and timelines for remaining burial types
- A summary of the current funding model and how it is being supplemented by Parks funding
- Options for adding more staff to increase levels of service

Council reflected on the report suggesting that the Cemetery was a place for serenity, reflection and remembrance. Based on the photos that showed the current state of the landscaping and general conditions in the cemetery, and due to the scaled back customer service times, Council indicated they were interested in seeing increased

fees to ensure the cemetery was self-funded with the staffing resources needed to maintain the facility.

## **DISCUSSION**

With the current levels of service, the City is utilizing approximately 1 FTE for Operations, and 1 FTE for administration, despite only funding 0.15 FTE's for Operations and 0.35 for Administration. These additional hours to operate the Cemetery are being funded from the General Parks Wages and is drawing staffing away from maintaining the rest of the City's Parks.

As had previously been discussed in September 2024, the different levels of service that were discussed included:

1. Cut back levels of service to maintain the cemetery based on current funding mechanisms, resulting in significantly decreased levels of service at the Cemetery.
2. Adding staff to maintain the existing levels of service. This would require staffing levels to be set at 1.0 FTE for administrative work and 1.0 FTE for operational work.
3. Adding more staff to achieve the recommended levels of service. This includes staffing to the following service levels:
  - 1.0 FTE Administration
  - 1.0 FTE Operator and
  - 0.8 FTE Seasonal Operator

Staff suggest raising the cemetery fees to implement option 3, which includes the recommended levels of service. Increasing the levels of service ensure that the administrative and onsite aspects of the cemetery are meeting the customer's needs. The core areas of improvement for the cemetery are the operational maintenance, planning and design, and customer services.

Recommended Operational Maintenance Improvements:

- Reduce the amounts of weeds along pathways and cremation areas
- maintain the turf areas with regular cuts
- complete aeration and fertilization routines
- preserve fence lines
- improve the overall aesthetics of the cemetery

Recommended Planning and Design Improvements:

- Clarifying onsite wayfinding
- Regularly updating online and onsite maps
- Providing consideration for expansion planning

- Improving and maintaining neighbour relations

Recommended Customer Service Improvements:

- Increasing office hours
- Assisting with burial and interment decisions for families in sensitive situations
- Coordinating booking and scheduling of Cemetery facility
- Developing cemetery marketing materials with visual and material examples
- Accommodate faster turnaround for the burials and internments

Cemetery Rate Review

Through a review done in 2023 by Lees and Associates of other cemeteries in the Central Okanagan, it was determined that the Westbank Cemetery’s fees are significantly lower than other cemeteries in the region. The fees shown below are the base costs for a burial and compare what a West Kelowna resident would pay in our cemetery versus what they would pay as a non-resident in an adjacent municipality. It should also be noted that additional fees could be added at time of interment should the client want to pay for special services, amenities, premium locations, etc.

City	Cremation - In Ground	Cremation - Columbarium	Cremation - Ossuary	Traditional Casket Burial	Mausolea
West Kelowna (Current)	\$ 1,064	\$ 4,100	\$ 370	\$ 2,795	\$ 23,449
Benchmark Proposed by Consultant	\$ 1,475	\$ 4,290	\$ 431	\$ 4,736	\$ 23,449
<b>West Kelowna Proposed w/ Add. 25%</b>	<b>\$ 1,844</b>	<b>\$ 5,363</b>	<b>\$ 539</b>	<b>\$ 5,920</b>	<b>\$ 29,311</b>
Kelowna	\$ 2,801	\$ 7,328	\$ 1,089	\$ 8,189	\$ 26,543
Penticton	\$ 1,422	\$ 5,412	\$ 680	\$ 4,195	\$ 38,060
Summerland	\$ 1,209	N/A	N/A	\$ 4,150	N/A
Vernon	\$ 1,531	N/A	N/A	\$ 6,049	N/A

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Raising the cemetery fees to a benchmark level as proposed by the consultant would provide the cemetery with enough funds to fully cover the costs of 1 FTE of administrative work and 1 FTE of operational work as per option 2 above. This would keep service levels as they currently are but would not be using the service of park operators. Based on 2023 cemetery revenues, the proposed increased fees would increase revenues as:

2023 Cemetery Revenues		(180,448)
2023 revenues at proposed rates		324,334
Increased Revenue available		<u>\$ 143,886</u>
Required FTE increases:		
Administration FTE	0.65	58,414
Operator FTE	0.85	81,837
Current Staffing		<u>\$ 140,251</u>

To raise service levels per option 3 above, these cemetery fees would need to be increased a further 25%. This would put the Westbank Cemetery fees slightly above the benchmark averages, but generally still lower than Kelowna's rates. The West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw (Attachment 1) includes these rates as recommended by staff.

2023 Cemetery Revenues		(180,448)
2023 revenues at proposed rates plus 25%		409,417
Increased Revenue available		<u>\$ 228,969</u>
Required FTE increases:		
Administration FTE	0.65	58,414
Operator FTE	0.85	81,837
Seasonal Operator	0.8	87,023
Current Staffing		<u>\$ 227,275</u>

## WEST KELOWNA CEMETERY BYLAW ADOPTION

In addition to the updated levels of service and associated fees, Lees and Associates recommended that the Bylaw to *Regulate the Operations and Maintenance of Westbank Cemetery - Bylaw 0166* is repealed and replaced with City of West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw No. 318. These changes are administrative in nature and will assist with the day-to-day operation of the cemetery.

### Key Changes Between the two Bylaws:

#### **Definitions Section:**

- New Definitions: The new bylaw introduces several new definitions such as "Applicant," "At-Need," "Capital Reserve Account," and "Green Burial."
- Updated Definitions: Some definitions have been updated for clarity and consistency with current practices.

#### **Right of Interment Section:**

- Purchase Limits: The new bylaw limits the purchase of Rights of Interment to one Lot per individual without prior consent.
- Transfer and Surrender: The process for transferring and surrendering Rights of Interment has been detailed more explicitly.

**Interment Procedures Section:**

- Advance Notice: The new bylaw requires a longer advance notice for interments, especially for weekends. This is to assist with scheduling and staffing.
- Interment Depth: Specific depths for interments have been clarified.
- Green Burial: Detailed provisions for Green Burials, including requirements for biodegradable materials and no embalming.

**Memorials:**

- Installation and Specifications: The new bylaw provides more detailed specifications for memorials, including dimensions, materials and wording.
- Temporary Memorials: Provisions for temporary memorials have been included.

**Fees and Charges:**

- Updated Fee Schedule: The new bylaw includes an updated fee schedule with annual increases.
- Itemization of Fees: Fees for Rights of Interment and other services are itemized more clearly.

**Administration and Maintenance:**

- Director's Responsibilities: The new bylaw outlines the responsibilities of the Director more comprehensively.
- Correction of Errors: Procedures for correcting errors in interments and records have been detailed.

**General Regulations:**

- Cemetery Rules: The new bylaw includes more detailed rules for behavior and activities within the cemetery.
- Penalties for Infractions: Specific penalties for violations of the bylaw have been included.

**COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY**

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
September 10, 2024	Westbank Cemetery Update	N/A

**Alternate Recommendation to Consider and Resolve:**

**THAT** Council give first, second and third reading to West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw No. 318 as amended to include the benchmark cemetery rates;

**AND THAT** Council authorize staff to include the increase revenues and requested FTEs into the 2025 Financial Plan.

**REVIEWED BY**

Lisa Siavashi, Financial Services Manager / Deputy CFO

Rob Hillis, Acting Director of Engineering and Operations

**APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY**

Trevor Seibel, Deputy CAO

PowerPoint: Yes  No

Attachments:

Attachment 1: West Kelowna Cemetery Bylaw No. 318