

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE 31 January 1997

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator,
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Finance Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANIMAL CONTROL AND POUND
FUNDING IN OTTAWA-CARLETON**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee receive and table this report with the following recommendations to be considered at the next Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee meeting scheduled for 4 March 1997:

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Endorse the principle that animal pound services is a fundamental and integral component of animal control;**
- 2. That the Area Municipalities, as the agency responsible for animal control, assume complete responsibility for pound services funding effective January 1, 1998;**
- 3. That the Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton's 1997 grant allocation for \$357,000 be approved.**

BACKGROUND

Under the *Municipal Act*, section 210, the Area Municipalities have been provided with authority to license, regulate and control animals at-large. There are currently no provisions under any Acts governing the RMOC that permit this Corporation to pass by-laws with respect to animal control. Animal control by-laws have been developed and are enforced by staff in each of the Area Municipalities, with the exception of Rockcliffe Park, where enforcement is carried out by the Cumberland Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police. In general, stray dogs and cats when caught are held in a common pound facility that is owned and operated by the Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton. (Because just three of the eleven Area Municipalities have by-laws dealing with cats at-large, only cats brought in by the general public are detained at the Humane Society pound for the remaining eight municipalities.) After being detained for three days from the time of their arrival any animal that has not been claimed is either put up for sale through the shelter facility or euthanized.

Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton

The Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton (Humane Society), a statutory body established pursuant to the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*, is guided by a fifteen member volunteer Board of Directors. The Humane Society is a registered charitable organization that operates primarily under the guidelines established in the *Municipal Act*, the *Pounds Act* and the *Animals for Research Act*. The Humane Society employs 22 full-time, and 16 part-time and casual employees. The 1997 budget for the Humane Society is \$1.9 million and based on estimates provided by the Humane Society, \$409,000 of this cost supports the pound operation.

The Humane Society's primary mandate is to focus on the prevention and investigation of cruelty to animals, enforcement of laws protecting animals, and to provide education and awareness programs to the community. The Humane Society currently receives its funding from four primary sources: fundraising activities, revenue from activities (such as the sale of animals, spay and neuter clinics and the sale of carcasses of euthanized animals), the RMOC grant, and a variety of miscellaneous contributions.

Since 1933 the Humane Society has provided the Area Municipalities in Ottawa-Carleton with a pound service for stray, lost and abandoned dogs and cats. The Humane Society operates two different businesses through its facility on Champagne Street in Ottawa: a pound operation which houses stray and impounded cats and dogs and a shelter operation, where domestic animals are put up for adoption. The Humane Society has acknowledged that the operation of the shelter forms an integral part of their mandate and as such does not consider its funding to be the responsibility of any level of government. The pound operation, however, is seen by the Humane Society as a direct responsibility of local government in the region. For this reason, the Humane Society has directed the grant money received from the RMOC to the pound side of the operation in support of this service.

While no formal agreement for pound services has ever been established, the Humane Society has taken on responsibility for providing pound services to the Area Municipalities. The pound operation services all eleven area municipalities and takes in both stray and impounded cats and dogs from the general public and from by-law officers. Annex A provides a breakdown by municipality. In 1995 the Humane Society took in a total of 5,800 animals, of which cats made up approximately 62% of the total pound population. Of this amount, only 3% of these cats arriving at the pound were claimed and returned to their original owners. The remainder were either sold through the shelter side of the operation or euthanized. The balance of the animals taken in to the pound were dogs, of which approximately 41% were claimed, with the remainder of the group following the same route as the unclaimed cat population.

Area Municipality Involvement in Animal Control

Based on estimates received from each of the Area Municipalities (with the exception of the City of Vanier who declined to respond), an estimated 11 full time equivalents (FTEs) currently support animal control throughout the region at a cost of \$641,000. With the exception of the Township of Cumberland, the Township of Osgoode and the City of Ottawa, all of the Area Municipalities were able to more than offset the cost of providing animal control through existing revenue streams. Annex B provides a breakdown by municipality of these revenues and expenditures.

RMOC Involvement

Notwithstanding that the RMOC is without any legislative authority permitting it to be involved in animal control, it has since its inception in 1969, provided funding support for the Humane Society operation through an annual discretionary grant. In 1996 Regional Council approved a \$357,000 grant which the Humane Society has used to offset a significant portion of the cost of operating the pound facility. The latest information provided by the Humane Society appears to indicate that the annual operating cost for the pound facility is \$409,000. After factoring in the RMOC grant and the \$21,000 in commission paid by the Area Municipalities, the Humane Society is left with a shortfall in funding of \$31,000.

DISCUSSION

In January 1996, after considering the Humane Society's request for funding, Regional Council requested that the Area Municipalities consider ways in which to compensate the Humane Society for services provided. At the same time the Humane Society informed the Area Municipalities that the grant received from the RMOC would not cover the cost of operating the pound service and that an additional \$167,000 would be required from the Area Municipalities to fund the anticipated difference. In response to this request, the Area Municipalities formed a committee to specifically review pound services. Membership to this committee consisted of representatives from the City of Ottawa, the City of Gloucester and the City of Nepean. In April of last year after an offer by the RMOC to become involved in resolving the funding concern, an RMOC representative joined the committee. The committee was tasked with reviewing pound services in Ottawa-Carleton and to arrive at possible solutions that would provide the necessary funding for pound services.

After a number of meetings of the Committee, it was concluded that several inequities exist with respect to the funding of pound services.

The Humane Society has a \$10/day pound charge for animals retrieved from the pound, the collection of which has not been rigorously enforced. Until recently, the existing Area Municipality by-laws did not contain the requirement for those claiming animals from the pound to remit payment of the Humane Society's **pound release fees** and as a result these fees have not been collected on a consistent basis. In 1996 the City of Nepean, the City of Ottawa and the Township of Cumberland enacted by-laws that impose this charge as part of the condition for releasing any animals. The Townships of West Carleton and Goulbourn have both indicated that it is not their intention to introduce by-laws that enforce payment of this fee. At this time, the indication is that the remaining municipalities expect to be introducing by-laws that deal with this issue in early 1997. Based on the average pound stay of 2.8 days per animal, it is expected that an additional **\$13,600** of revenue could be anticipated if this charge was enforced by all Area Municipalities.

Owners of animals that were brought in by by-law enforcement officers and later claimed are required to pay the relevant **municipal release fee**. Up until last year, animals that were brought in by the general public and subsequently claimed were not required to pay the municipal release fee. In the past year three of the eleven municipalities have enacted by-laws that require the payment of municipal release fees under all circumstances. If all Area Municipalities were to follow this lead and the Humane Society was permitted to retain these fees, there would be an additional **\$13,000** in revenue resulting from this initiative.

The Humane Society and the City of Ottawa have just recently settled on a Capital Facilities Agreement that provides the Humane Society with a property tax relief for the pound facility. This will result in an additional annual operating savings of approximately **\$17,000**.

In addition to these committee discussions, the Humane Society has also indicated that it anticipates saving an additional **\$12,000**, most of which is expected to come from a reduction in the number of staff hours required to cover pound operations

In total, these initiatives would reduce the pound funding requirement by **\$55,600**. This, along with the **\$21,000** that the Humane Society currently receives from its pound release fees and Area Municipalities commissions, would reduce the total funding requirement to **\$332,400**. A breakdown of the projected expenses and revenues, including those resulting from these changes, can be found in Annex C.

Furthermore, the Area Municipalities and the RMO, through the Inter-municipal By-law Enforcement Committee, have hired a consultant who specialises in animal related matters to review the Humane Society's Pound operation and make recommendations with respect to ways in which the pound operation could be made more efficient and to obtain a more accurate assessment of the costs attributed to running the pound. This review is expected to be completed

in the spring of this year and it is expected that the results of this review will provide some cost reduction measures. Because the Humane Society operates both a pound facility and a shelter facility, it has experienced some difficulty dividing staff time between the two sides of the operation. As a result, the task of identifying the true cost of the pound operation has proven to be a difficult exercise.

CONCLUSION

Pound service is a basic requirement for animal control and without it animal control measures cannot properly be enforced. Although the RMOC, since its inception, has been funding pound services, the Area Municipalities have been establishing by-laws that determine the level and cost of these pound services. This arrangement has resulted in the RMOC being left without any ability to control the cost of a service to which it makes a substantial contribution.

Notwithstanding that a number of revenue generating concepts have been, or are in the process of being introduced, they are not nearly enough to replace the grant provided to the Humane Society by the RMOC. As such, additional measures need to be taken in order to replace the grant with a model that directly links the cost of pound services with the animal control function and those who bring on the need for the service.

This is a service that best lends itself to a user pay system, in a way where the general taxpayer is not burdened with the expense associated with looking after the animal population. One way to make the pound operation self-sustaining would be to increase the price of each dog license across Ottawa-Carleton by \$13. However, the RMOC does not have any legislative authority to adjust license fees or to impose a user pay fee structure concerning animal control and as a result would not be able to achieve this result.

Effective cost control and cost reduction can only be accomplished when the funding agency has the ability to effect changes that impact spending levels. At the present time this does not exist. The Area Municipalities possess full responsibility for managing animal control. This should include the funding of pound services.

CONSULTATION

It is recommended that this report be tabled to provide the Area Municipalities and the Humane Society with an opportunity to review the report before being brought back to the next Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee scheduled for 4 March 1997.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This will result in a reduction in the grant envelope of \$357,000 in 1998. In order to adjust for the impact this would have on the Area Municipalities and the RMOC, there would be a requirement to restate mill rates.

Approved by
J.C. LeBelle
Finance Commissioner

Pound Statistics
(Based on 1995 Figures)

<i>Area Municipality</i>	<i>Animals brought to the Pound</i>				<i>Animals Claimed</i>
	<i>Cats</i>	<i>Dogs</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Portion</i>	
Township of Cumberland	217	132	349	6%	101
City of Gloucester	366	280	646	11%	136
Township of Goulbourn	64	29	93	2%	13
City of Kanata	86	57	143	2%	40
City of Nepean	408	273	681	12%	174
Township of Osgoode	58	69	127	2%	23
City of Ottawa	1,968	1,159	3,127	54%	450
Township of Rideau	21	27	48	1%	16
Village of Rockcliffe Park	4	2	6	0%	2
City of Vanier	371	139	510	9%	70
Township of West Carleton	47	35	82	1%	22
Total	3,610	2,202	5,812	100%	1,047

Source: Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton

Animal Control Costs
(Based on 1995 Figures)

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Municipality</i>			<i>Collected by HSOC</i>
	<i>Revenues</i>	<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Balance</i>	
	<i>\$</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>\$</i>
Township of Cumberland	55,489	77,065	(21,576)	2,392
City of Gloucester	44,191	38,700	5,491	2,252
Township of Goulbourn*	32,140	17,616	14,524	273
City of Kanata	41,100	40,000	1,100	672
City of Nepean	91,535	74,400	17,135	4,146
Township of Osgoode	34,433	43,400	(8,967)	492
City of Ottawa	192,792	324,743	(131,951)	8,687
Township of Rideau	15,764	7,480	8,284	336
Village of Rockcliffe Park	2,527	-	2,527	27
City of Vanier				1,155
Township of West Carleton	19,738	17,616	2,122	472
RMOC	-	357,000	(357,000)	-
Total		\$998,020		\$20,904

Source: Provided by Area Municipalities and the Humane Society

NOTES:

* Township of Goulbourn's expenses estimated based on the Township of West Carleton's

Summary of Pound Expenses and Projected Revenues

<i>Total expenses</i>	\$409,000
<u>Funding:</u>	
Existing Pound Release Fees and Commissions <i>(Includes Humane Society pound release fees and various commissions paid by Area Municipalities)</i>	\$ 21,000
Collection of Humane Society's pound fees	\$ 13,600
Collection of municipal release fees for stray animals	\$ 13,000
Capital Facilities Agreement for tax relief	\$ 17,000
Reduction in Humane Society staff hours	<u>\$ 12,000</u>
<i>Total Funding</i>	\$ 76,600
Outstanding Difference	<u>(\$332,400)</u>