



Subject: *Termination of dog control services - Nova Scotia SPCA*
To: CAO for Corporate & Residential Services Committee, December 9, 2025
Date Prepared: November 3, 2025
Related Motions:
Prepared by: Kelly Ash, Manager of Development Services
Approved by: John Woodford, Director of Planning & Development

Summary

The Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NS SPCA) has given notice that they will be terminating the current contract for dog control services, including all enforcement, after-hours and kenneling. The contract will end on March 31, 2026, at which time all services will revert back to the responsibility of the Municipality.

To effectively offer dog control services beyond March 31, 2026, the municipality will be required to enter into a contract for kenneling (excluding any required veterinarian care); purchase a vehicle capable of transporting dogs to a kennel and veterinarian (when required); purchase various vehicle/safety equipment and operational supplies; budget for additional staffing and an after-hours service (including call service/on-call/overtime).

Financial Impact Statement

The amount currently in the 25/26 operating budget for the Nova Scotia SPCA contract is \$40,000/year.

\$40,500 was also approved during the last budget process for a vehicle in capital project 23-019 to be purchased in 26/27. We will need to move this purchase to the current fiscal year and anticipate a budget need of \$96,000. This is not a new vehicle. It will be a replacement of an existing vehicle in our fleet. It is an upgrade to the type of vehicle required for the service.

Due to the notice provided to the municipality by the SPCA, the one-time costs needed in the current year of 25/26 (operating and capital) to prepare for the first year of service is estimated at \$111,000 (see page 3 and 4 for details), and the ongoing annual operating cost starting in 26/27 is estimated to be \$125,000.

Recommendations

That Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend that *Council approve an increase in the 25/26 operating budget of \$15,000 for dog control supplies to be funded from the GTR Contingency Reserve. And that the committee also recommend Council approve an increase in capital project 23-019 to \$96,000 for the purpose of purchasing a vehicle and required upgrades, with funding to come from Municipal Vehicles Reserve (G306). This purchase is authorized for fiscal 2025-2026 to be ready for an April 1, 2026 operational start.*

All other matters relating to dog control services will be reviewed during the 2026/27 budget discussions.

Recommended Motions

That Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend that *Council approve an increase in the 25/26 operating budget of \$15,000 for dog control supplies to be funded from the GTR Contingency Reserve.*

That Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend that *Council approve an increase in capital project 23-019 to \$96,000 for the purpose of purchasing a vehicle and required upgrades, with funding*

to come from Municipal Vehicles Reserve (G006). And that this purchase be authorized for fiscal 2025-2026 to be ready for an April 1, 2026 operational start.

Background

Previously, the Municipality operated its own kennel in a building located at the Waste Management Centre in Georgefield, which was not a sustainable model. After that, the Municipality contracted the service to a private kennel operator located in West Hants.

In April 2015, we initiated an after-hours service for dog control. Scotia Business Centre was the agency responsible for receiving after-hours calls based on a municipal protocol provided to them. An after-hours schedule with a 2-week rotation between the full-time Bylaw Enforcement & Dog Control Officer and a casual employee was provided to the call centre. In the event that a call-out was required, they would contact the employee on call based on the schedule.

In 2019, we entered into a contract with the Nova Scotia SPCA for kennel services, and expanded that contract for full dog control services later that year, including after-hours coverage.

In March 2025, the Nova Scotia SPCA gave notice of their intent to terminate the existing agreement, effective March 31, 2026.

Dog control enforcement will once again be the responsibility of the Municipality as of April 1, 2026.

Discussion

Dog control was managed solely by the Municipality up until 2019. That included enforcement of Bylaw P-1000 - Dog Bylaw, kennel services, veterinarian services, and after-hours services.

From 2019 to present, the Nova Scotia SPCA has provided dog control services to the Municipality. From 2020 to present, they responded to an average of 45 calls/year, with most complaints related to dogs at large, barking, as well as fierce and dangerous dogs. No metrics were recorded for the number of responses that were a part of the after-hours service portion of the contract.

From 2015 to 2019, when the Municipality was providing after-hours coverage, an average of 53 after-hours calls were received per year. There was an average of 20 calls that triggered an after-hours response by staff per year.

As it has been several years since we've provided these services internally, the following will need to be addressed in the upcoming budget:

- Enforcement of Bylaw P-1000 - Dog Bylaw, including:
 - Response to dog-related complaints (roaming, fierce & dangerous, barking, nuisance, etc.)
 - Capture, transportation, and impoundment of roaming or dangerous dogs; impoundment is proposed to be a separate external contract
 - Maintenance and operation of a secure kennel facility through an external contract
 - Update Municipal Fees Policy to include impound and redemption fees
 - Provision of after-hours response capability; including additional staffing
 - Record keeping, reporting, and public education as required by the Municipality

An email was sent to multiple kennel operators seeking an expression of interest in providing kennel services to the Municipality.

Only one operator in the Truro area responded. We are currently negotiating a fee for service agreement. Any veterinary care would be a separate fee that would be charged to the owner if a dog was claimed. If not, the fee would have to be absorbed by the Municipality.

Impound fees and daily boarding fees will need to be added to the Municipal Fees Policy, as was our previous process. In 2017, the impound/redemption fee was \$40, and the daily boarding fee was \$15. It is expected these fees will increase based on a quick jurisdictional scan.

VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Staff should be equipped with a purpose-built vehicle that meets safety and animal welfare standards, including:

- Secure, ventilated animal transport compartments with temperature control
- Lockable containment to prevent escape and protect the public
- Separation barriers for multiple animals or aggressive dogs
- Emergency lighting and municipal identification decals

FIELD & SAFETY EQUIPMENT

To perform duties safely and effectively, staff will require:

- Catch poles, leashes, muzzles, and nets
- Portable kennels and carriers
- First aid kits for both staff and animals
- Disinfectants and cleaning supplies to prevent disease transmission
- Bite-resistant gloves and arm guards
- Protective clothing (high-visibility vests, steel-toe boots, weather gear)
- Rabies pre-exposure vaccinations and access to post-exposure treatment, if needed
- Training in defensive handling, animal behavior, and de-escalation techniques
- Two-way communication devices and GPS tracking for officer safety

AFTER-HOURS COVERAGE

Dog-related emergencies frequently occur outside of standard business hours. To ensure continuous public safety and animal welfare:

- On-call system: A dedicated staff member available to respond to emergencies
- Tiered response system: Non-urgent calls may be deferred to regular hours, while urgent incidents receive immediate attention
- Coordination with local law enforcement and kennel operator for joint response, as needed
- Public contact protocol: Clear messaging via municipal website and phone system regarding after-hours procedures and contact numbers

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The cost breakdown below are estimates:

One-time costs:

Item	Approximate Cost	Additional comments
Vehicle	\$76,000	Commercial van; vehicle is captured in capital budget for future years *

Vehicle Equipment	\$20,000	Barrier between front and back of vehicle, if not equipped 2 stainless steel kennels Ramp Plastic floor cover
Safety Equipment	\$7,000	Catch poles, gloves, muzzles, leashes, etc
Operational Supplies	\$3,000	Microchip reader, cleaning supplies, latex gloves, food, treats, etc
Staffing supplies	\$5,000	Uniform, boots, coats, cell phone, computer
Total	\$111,000	

* This is a replacement of existing vehicle in our fleet, but it is an upgrade to the type pf vehicle. We currently have an SUV, but the van is required in order to hold kennels in the rear of the vehicle.

Estimated annual costs, starting in 26/27:

Item	Approximate Cost	Additional comments
Kennel services	\$40,000	(\$80/dog x 10 dogs impounded/year, estimate) Housing, food, exercise; includes if we have to keep a dog impounded related to a court case
Safety Equipment	\$5,000	Miscellaneous items
Operational Supplies	\$2,000	Cleaning supplies, latex gloves, food, treats
After-hours call service	\$5,000	Scotia Business Centre
On-call & overtime (including 2 part-time staff)	\$30,000	Previous budget was \$7,000 in 2019 for 1 FT staff and 1 casual staff
Staffing supplies	\$3,000	Items, as needed
Veterinary care	\$40,000	Estimate at this time
Total	\$125,000	

Bylaw P-1000 Dog Bylaw will need to be updated to reflect the transition of the service back to the Municipality.

The Municipal Fees Policy will also need to be updated to reflect the requirement for impound and redemption fees, as previously mentioned.

These numbers are subject to change and will be finalized for budget season.

Alternatives

To go back to regular business hour coverage (8:30am-4:30pm M-F) only as was done prior to 2015.

Attachments

Capital Project Template for upgraded vehicle