

Corporate Report

NO: <u>R009</u>

COUNCIL DATE: _FEBRUARY 12, 2007

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: February 12, 2007

FROM: General Manager, Finance & Technology FILE: 1810-01

SUBJECT: Criminal Record Search Fees

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council direct staff to take all necessary actions to exempt Surrey residents, volunteering for non-profit organizations within the Greater Vancouver Regional District, from the fees associated with criminal record searches related to their volunteer positions.

BACKGROUND

At the December 18, 2006 Regular Meeting, Council referred a letter from Sandy Armitage to staff. Sandy is a volunteer physiotherapist and a board member for the Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities (PRDA). The letter requested Council's consideration in waiving the criminal record search fee for residents who choose to volunteer for organizations that are not located in Surrey, but may serve the needs of Surrey residents.

DISCUSSION

The City of Surrey currently performs over 12,900 criminal record searches per year, of which approximately 3,900 are performed at no charge for volunteers and City employees. The current fee-setting bylaw (No. 14577) sets the criminal record search fee at \$40.00 and indicates that this fee is exempt only to Surrey residents who volunteer for Surrey-based organizations.

Council has been requested to consider the review of the fee associated with criminal record searches for Surrey residents who volunteer for organizations that are not based in Surrey, however may provide services to many Surrey residents.

Criminal record searches are performed by the policing jurisdiction of the community in which an individual resides and are a requirement for any individuals who works or volunteers with children. The City of Surrey currently has one of the lowest fees for criminal record searches in the Lower Mainland and waives this fee for volunteers of Surrey-based organizations. However most of our neighbouring municipalities waive the fee for all volunteers, regardless of where the organization is based.

When Surrey resident volunteers for an organization that is not Surrey—based, the fee must be paid and generally the non-profit organization reimburses the individual for the cost in order to ensure equal treatment of all their volunteers. This costs puts an additional financial burden on the non-profit organization. It is therefore recommended that Council consider waiving the criminal record search fee for all Surrey residents who provide proof that they are volunteering for organizations in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

CONCLUSION

As directed by Council, staff have reviewed the application of the criminal records search fee for the City of Surrey and the neighbouring communities. Surrey has one of the lowest fees for this service in the Lower Mainland. However, unlike neighbouring municipalities, Surrey does not exempt all volunteers. It is therefore recommended that criminal record search fees be waived for Surrey residents who provide proof that they are volunteering for organizations within the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Vivienne Wilke, CGA General Manager, Finance & Technology

Cc: OIC Surrey Detachment