

November 11, 2021

Guelph City Council
c/o City Clerks' Office
clerks@guelph.ca

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors,

RE: Guelph Humane Society – Community Benefit Agreement Renewal

Thank you for your consideration of the renewal of the Guelph Humane Society's Community Benefit Agreement in the amount of \$150,000.

As you know, the Guelph Humane Society is the contracted provider for Animal Services in the City of Guelph, providing comprehensive services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, including by-law enforcement, field and rescue services and pound services. As a charitable humane society, GHS is available to the residents of Guelph to help with any animal related concerns, including community outreach, accessible services, humane education, pet & farm animal adoption, lost & found pet program, wildlife care, animal sheltering, volunteer opportunities, pet relinquishment, emergency boarding, and general support.

The last municipal Animal Services and Pound contract was awarded by the City of Guelph to GHS in 2011 for the amount of **\$564,034.74**. CPI increases have only been given in the last few years, bringing the 2021 contract amount to **\$609,923.16** (an 8% increase in 10 years). Since the contract was awarded, the following significant increases have occurred:

- **Scope of service** – The level of services required by the City of Guelph has increased significantly since 2011. GHS is now enforcing an expanded scope of animal-related bylaws, including enforcing the cat licensing by-law, the poultry by-laws, the provisions of the by-law related to animal welfare (ie. dogs in hot cars) and the prohibition on feeding wildlife. This expanded scope of services is a result of the new Animal Control By-law, as amended in 2016 and 2018. No additional compensation was offered to GHS despite the required increase in responsibilities, and subsequent

related requests for service. In addition to enforcing the new by-law, GHS is now also providing housing for impounded poultry (chicken & ducks), which we have not previously been required to do, again without additional compensation.

- **Demand for Services** - Guelph is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada. Population growth, and the continued development of suburban areas increases the number of human-animal interactions, thus continuing the need for a strong animal services provider. With people, come pets as well as encroachment on wildlife habitats – both leading to a greater demand for service. In 2020, our animal services officers responded to more than 3500 requests for services in the community. This does not include members of the community bringing animals, such as cats and wildlife, to GHS for help. Our organization must keep pace with the demand for service, as dictated by a growing community.
- **Staffing** – Over the last 10 years, wages have increased significantly, and GHS has had to keep step with these increases. In particular, it is necessary to remain competitive when hiring for our by-law officers, client services representatives and animal care attendants – especially when comparing with employers like City of Guelph (by-law officers) and private veterinary clinics (reception and animal care). Like the City of Guelph, GHS wants to offer competitive salaries, excellent benefit packages, opportunities for professional development and programs to support personal health and wellness, but we simply cannot do that with the existing compensation structure. Minimum wage was \$10.25 in 2011, and it will now be \$15.00 (with living wage at \$18.10), as an example.
- **Officer Safety** – Overall, there has been an increased need for safety training and protective equipment for enforcement officers. As an employer, GHS is also obligated to ensure our Animal Services Officers are safe during the course of their duties. Over the last 10 years, there has been a significant change in the expectation of personal protective equipment (e.g. tactical vests and batons) and training (e.g. use-of-force; tactical communications) for by-law officers. GHS must meet the City's standard for contractor safety in order to mitigate risks and ensure officer safety. These costs were never contemplated at the time the 2011 original service agreement but must be included now.
- **Veterinary costs** – As per the contract, the City reimburses up to \$500 for a stray pet that requires urgent medical care during its 5-day stray impoundment period. If an injured stray animal needs a medical exam, diagnostics, and hospitalization, the fee is just over \$1000 for one day of care. If the

stray pet needs continued hospitalization (on IV fluids) while we attempt to locate an owner, it's a minimum of \$500-600/day after that. This is simply life-sustaining care for a pet with recoverable injuries or illness. For more serious cases, where an animal needs surgery to alleviate distress, which cannot otherwise be controlled by pain medication or hospitalization during the impound period, the cost can be considerably more. The Guelph Humane Society is bearing these costs on behalf of the City, because there is no alternative.

- **Increase in Costs** - Like all businesses, GHS faces a general increase in costs related to the provision of services on behalf of the City. Items of notable increase in the last 10 years include the price of gasoline, the cost of the afterhours dispatch services, the requirement for enhanced technology and price of pet food and pet related supplies. Without any annual increases on the contract amount for several years, and many costs increasing faster than the CPI, the cost to deliver the municipal animal services has significantly outpaced the compensation received from the City.
- **Community Expectations** - Community attitudes towards animals are changing and demanding a greater level of service from GHS, as well as a greater level of accessibility and inclusivity of those services. Guelph is becoming more and more compassionate towards vulnerable animals and wildlife, and are therefore, looking for a modern and easily accessible approach to community animal care. Long-gone is the idea of simply being the dog catcher and operating a dog pound facility. GHS is an essential service in the community.

To make up for this shortfall in contract funding as outlined above, and ensure the City continues to receive a high level of service, **GHS has had to utilize its own operational funds**, such as donations and adoption revenue. This utilization of other funds impacts our ability to deliver our core humane society services which greatly benefit the residents of Guelph – such as community education, outreach services and pet adoption – equally necessary community services that our donors and supporters expect us to deliver. The current delivery of animal services and pound operation is not a sustainable model for the Guelph Humane Society to continue to operate under.

The Community Benefit Agreement renewal funding will help ensure GHS can deliver both a high-quality municipal animal service and essential community programs like humane education and low-cost pet services. Without the additional funding, GHS will be forced to re-evaluate the provision of animal services on the behalf of the City of Guelph, as the current funding is insufficient and hinders our charitable activities – our primary purpose. We simply cannot continue this way.

I look forward to answering your questions and a fulsome discussion about this topic at Council on November 18, 2021.

Sincerely,



ADRIENNE McBRIDE
Executive Director