



Subject: Animal Control Services – Animal Shelter – Enhanced Services

To: Council

From: Community Safety & Enforcement Department

Report Number: 2025-76

Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

Recommendation:

That Community Safety & Enforcement Department Report 2025-76 be received; and

That Council approve providing enhanced animal control services at the Port Colborne Animal Shelter; and

That the funding associated with the enhanced services in the amount of \$14,197 for the remainder of 2025 be approved; and

That \$24,280 and \$24,905 for Years Two and Three of the contract, respectively, be allocated into the annual budget process to ensure continued service.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek funding and approval to enhance the service and hours of the Animal Shelter located at 1080 Elm Street, Port Colborne.

Background:

The Port Colborne Animal Shelter has been on part-time hours for many years. The Niagara SCPA and Humane Society is our long-time serving contractor who has been caring for the animals and serving the public.

The first year of the new Animal Control contract, which was the result of a public procurement process, will expire on April 30.

Should Council approve the enhanced services at the Port Colborne Animal Shelter, only eight months of funding is required for 2025. Future years' costs are to be allocated in the 2026 and beyond budget process.

Staff have been awaiting the appointment of the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Niagara SPCA and Humane Society. Now that Amelia Canto has been appointed, it is appropriate timing to move forward with Niagara SPCA and Humane Society projects here in Port Colborne.

Discussion:

The Niagara SPCA and Humane Society, in conjunction with By-law Services, have been working towards improving the services at the Port Colborne Animal Shelter, including the meet-and-greet playground area for the well-being of the dogs. It was identified that some requirements for the health and safety of the animals are not currently being met. Requests have been received from the public regarding increased access to attend the animal shelter to pay for dog tags, visit the animals, get them out of the penned area and out for walks, playtime and socializing. If the services were enhanced, the dogs would feel and behave better while in the shelter; resulting in reduced costs for health care, food, and staff time as these animals would be adopted at a quicker rate.

It has been a desire of By-law Services to expand the hours to accommodate the needs of all.

Current hours	Proposed hours
Closed Sundays and Mondays Tuesday to Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Open for the public. Staff arrive at 8:00 a.m.	Monday to Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Open for public Monday to Saturday. Staff arrive at 8:00 a.m. Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Not open to public, only volunteers and staff

This is an additional 12 staffing hours per week.

Internal Consultations:

Niagara SPCA and Humane Society comments:

With increased hours we will be able to offer more enrichment, behaviour training, volunteer opportunities and more availability for community members to adopt or access

services. Our goal with the extension of hours is to reach a higher level of standards of care the animals receive at the Port Colborne shelter location.

Financial Implications:

The proposed enhanced services would be \$14,197 for the remainder of 2025. Year Two is \$24,280 and Year Three is \$24,905. The 2025 requirement will be incorporated in the already approved 2025 budget.

Public Engagement:

Staff did not conduct public engagement for this matter; however, requests have been received by staff for a number of years regarding increased hours of access to the Port Colborne Animal Shelter.

Volunteer Comments:

As volunteers, our main areas of focus are socializing and exercising the shelter animals, with the hopes of reducing their stress levels, and ultimately increasing their chances of adoption (reducing the amount of time in the shelter).

Extending the operating hours would have the following volunteer benefits:

Improve Ability to Recruit New Volunteers - Most people have full or part time commitments; current operating hours make it difficult to get new volunteers.

Improve Volunteer Retention - Some volunteers are going to great lengths to accommodate existing hours, but it is not sustainable; we risk losing them to burnout, injury or going to other rescues, putting more pressure on remaining volunteers.

Greater Opportunity to Participate – This drives a sense of contribution and purpose, and current volunteers have said they could help more often, or stay longer, if the hours were extended.

Improve Volunteer Satisfaction & Engagement

- Feeling more valued because greater flexibility is being offered
- More pride in representing the shelter, and promoting it to others
- Satisfaction knowing volunteer visits can be spread out, and animals will get more attention
- Increased opportunity to do fun offsite activities (day trips, community visits) – a fantastic and rewarding way to drive awareness for the dog and the shelter
- Fewer days that the animals go without seeing a volunteer – this is one of the most upsetting, demotivating things for our group

- Happier animals because they have more socialization; this is the most rewarding, motivating thing for volunteers.

To summarize, the extended hours are anticipated to result in more volunteer satisfaction and engagement, which will improve the animal's quality of life while in the SPCA care and potentially facilitate faster turnaround times for adoption.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
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Conclusion:

The proposed enhanced services will have an outside impact for animals and the citizens of Port Colborne.

Appendices:

- a. NSPCA Proposal Enhanced Services 2025
- b. NSPCA PowerPoint Presentation Enhanced Services 2025

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.