



News Release

July 16, 2021

Ponoka Town Council Approves First Reading of New Business Licence Bylaw

(July 16, 2021 – Ponoka, Alberta) – Ponoka Town Council gave first reading to a new Business Licence Bylaw at its regular meeting this week. The proposed new Bylaw 443-20 would replace the Town's existing Business Licence Bylaw with the purpose of regulating businesses and business activities within town boundaries.

The Town's existing Business License Bylaw, which was adopted in 2010, has become outdated and no longer adequately addresses current licensing issues. The proposed new Bylaw removes unnecessary and redundant provisions. It also introduces shorter term licensing options that give businesses greater flexibility and are available at reduced rates. The proposed new Bylaw includes:

- **A Short-Term Business Licence** that provides licensing for a four-month term to accommodate seasonal businesses and businesses operating in town for a shorter period of time than the standard one-year licence that is also available under the Bylaw; and
- **A Single-Event Business Licence** that provides licensing for a 24-hour period to accommodate Chauffeured Vehicles for Hire that may only need to operate in town for one day.

Seasonal business owners and non-resident contractors have expressed interest in having business licence options that are available for shorter periods of time.

The proposed new Bylaw also includes a new Regional Resident Business Licence that is available at a lower fee than a Non-Resident (out-of-town) Licence. The Regional Resident Business Licence is intended for nearby businesses located in Ponoka County and the Town of Rimbey.

New Business Categories

Two new business types have been introduced under the new proposed Bylaw: Chauffeured Vehicles for Hire, and Escorts and Escort Agencies. While there are currently no licensed Escorts or Escort Agencies operating within town limits, including this business category in the Bylaw is a proactive measure that would allow the Town to regulate any such future businesses.

Chaffeured Vehicles for Hire applies to businesses providing motor vehicles for hire including taxicabs, limousines or ride-sharing providers such as Uber, Lyft, etc. Regulating these businesses helps ensure that licensed vehicles are maintained in a safe operating manner and are regulated with fairness and consistency.

Licence Fee Schedule and Deadline

Under the new Bylaw, annual licence fees will now be due by December 31 for the following year.

In general, the Town's existing licence fees remain unchanged under the new Bylaw. New fees have been introduced for new licence types. The new fees were determined based on a review of business licence fees and charges in other Alberta municipalities, as well as the Town's existing licence fees.



The proposed new Business Licence Bylaw also includes new penalties and charges for Bylaw contraventions. The penalty amounts are comparable to other municipalities, are reflective of the nature of the infraction and are designed to discourage non-compliance.

To view the proposed Business Licence Bylaw No. 443-20, please visit the Town website at www.ponoka.ca under Recent News or click on the following link: <https://www.ponoka.ca/business/planning-and-development/business-licensing>.

Ponoka Town Council will consider second and third reading of the proposed new Bylaw at an upcoming Council meeting in the coming weeks. Citizens who have questions about the proposed new Bylaw can contact Town of Ponoka Development Services at 403-783-0140 or by email at permits@ponoka.ca.

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