



**8 January 2013**

## **City Council Committee Report**

**To: Mayor and Council**

**Fr: Joanne L. McMillin, City Clerk**

**Re: Updated Taxi By-law**

### **Recommendation:**

That Council hereby authorizes various updates to the current Taxi By-law to reflect a number of housekeeping changes to By-law Number 88-2009 but does not include a meter rate increase for taxi fares as recently requested by Co-ot Taxi; and

That Council gives three readings to a new comprehensive by-law to License and regulate Taxi Cabs, Limousines and Drays operating within and from the City of Kenora that will take effect and come into force on June 1, 2013, effectively repealing By-law Number 88-2009, as amended at that time; and further

That once adopted, the new by-law be directed to the City Solicitor to forward to the province for approval of the Set Fine Schedule.

### **Background:**

Current Taxi By-law Number 88-2009 has been in need of updating and it has been reviewed by our Solicitor to ensure changes being made are accurate and in keeping with current legislation. You may recall last fall the Clerk's Office held two public outreach sessions pertaining to upcoming accessibility changes however other than a few required wording changes in the new by-law stating that a higher or additional fee cannot be charged to persons with disabilities, there are no fundamental changes regarding those matters. Accessibility legislation as it relates to taxis will be identified at the time the City rolls out its comprehensive plan.

For the most part, the updated by-law addresses a number of housekeeping items as they relate to:

- Additional definitions
- Clearer wording on the application process
- Additional wording for suspensions, revocations, and transfers
- Inclusion of reference to a mileage (road) test as well as a taxi meter calibration testing fee
- Change in mechanical fitness from twice to once per year (to be confirmed) and changing that requirement to be before January 15 rather than December 31
- Requirement for vehicle registration bumper sticker; and
- Additional set fine for 'fail to post bumper sticker.'

Further to Co-ot's recent request for a 2013 increase in meter fares, I forwarded the request to Blue Taxi for comment. Below are the reasons why Blue Taxi is opposed to a meter increase:

- Kenora's low economy already impacts ridership with the current meter rates;
- Fares in surrounding areas are lower than Kenora's and this also has an impact to our market as these taxis come and go;
- Concerns that the 'gypsy taxis' will continue to be problematic with a meter increase;
- There is also a cost to taxi drivers associated with adjusting their meters due to a rate increase.

It was an interesting observation by our Solicitor that municipalities are not required to regulate taxi fees and while this was briefly considered, it is not a fair and equitable solution to the impasse whereby some drivers are in favour of the increase and others are not. However this of course is a Council decision and not a legal one, and at this point that option is not being recommended.

In considering the issue of an increase (start-up rate from \$4.30 to \$4.95), there has to be a balance; if we are regulating the meter rates we want to ensure the continued financial viability of the taxi service providers, while at the same time understanding what the market can bear and protecting the public at the same time from being overcharged or undercharged. It should be noted the last increase to Kenora's rates was in 2011.

We reviewed current rates in the area with Red Lake the highest followed by Kenora. Sioux Lookout Council did not support a request for an increase this year, and we understand there have not been any increases authorized for 2013 and most likely none expected. Current rates are outlined below (based on start-up only, additional k/m rates are similar):

Red Lake: \$5.00, Kenora: \$4.30, Sioux Lookout: \$4.00, Dryden: \$3.80,  
Fort Frances: \$3.95, Thunder Bay: \$3.00, Winnipeg: \$3.50.

The new by-law is scheduled to come into force on June 1, 2013 to allow the required time for the Set Fine Schedule to be processed and approved by the province.

A copy of the draft (marked-up) by-law is posted on SharePoint with this report.

**Budget:**

No impact.

**Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:**

Law Office, Licencing Clerk, Fleet Supervisor, Taxi Companies