

Subject: Lost or Unclaimed Property Policy FEM-020	
APPROVALS:	
Jamie Doyle	
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Director	Chief Administrative Officer

Recommended Motion:

THAT the Lost or Unclaimed Property Policy FEM-020, dated December 14, 2021, be approved.

Summary:

This policy is being proposed to formalize the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's (Municipality) internal process of handling lost or unclaimed property, while aligning with requirements of the Government of Alberta's *Municipal Government Act* (MGA).

Background:

In 2019 an internal project reviewed and consolidated the handling of lost or unclaimed property that came into the Municipality's possession. This process was captured in an Administrative Directive and the function moved under the Pulse Branch, within the Communications and Engagement Department, to oversee.

To further solidify the process, and to recognize provincial legislation, it was advised to develop a Council Policy to accompany the Administrative Directive. The Policy, developed in 2021, formalizes and supports the current practice. Currently, Lost and Found Property Administrative Directive FEM-020-D, guides municipal employees in tracking, retaining and disposing of lost or unclaimed property. Presently lost or unclaimed property is not disposed of via public auction. Table 1, below, is an excerpt from the Lost and Found Property Administrative Directive FEM-020-D and outlines current disposition methods.

Table 1

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
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A	Wallets, purses, cash, personal ID cards, drivers' licenses, credit cards, financial/legal/medical documents, passports jewelry.	Retain for thirty (30) days, then transfer to the RCMP.
B	Electronic Devices including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, iPad, iPod, e-readers, cameras, items with serial number, etc.	Retain for thirty (30) days, then transfer to the RCMP.
C	Prescription Medications including prescription cannabis, packaged syringes.	Retain for thirty (30) days, then transfer to a pharmacy for disposal.
D	Backpacks & school supplies, books stationary items, clothing, nonperishable food items and miscellaneous items.	Retain for forty-five (45) days, then donate to a Social Profit.
E	Bicycles	Retain for forty-five (45) days, then transfer to the local SPCA for charity auction.
F	Food products, perishable goods, alcohol products and unhygienic items.	Immediate disposal. Liquids should be poured into a drain and other items placed in a garbage receptable. No record generated of receipt.
G	Hazardous Items that pose a danger to the public. This includes drugs, non-prescription cannabis and drug paraphernalia, weapon, illegal and/or hazardous substances.	1. Contact appropriate department to secure the area. 2. Contact the Health and Safety Branch and follow the Incident management Process.

H	Sharp containers	Transfer to Firehall # 1 for proper disposal.
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As well, the Lost or Unclaimed Property Policy FEM-020 is proposed to align the Municipality with the MGA and internal processes. Section 610 of the MGA ("Lost or unclaimed property") states:

- (1) Lost or unclaimed property coming into the possession of a municipality must be retained for at least 30 days from the date it comes into possession of the municipality unless it is unsafe, unsanitary or perishable, in which case it may be disposed of at any time.
- (2) If property is not claimed within 30 days, it becomes the property of the municipality, and the municipality may dispose of the property by public auction or as the council directs.
- (3) The purchaser of lost or unclaimed property is the absolute owner of it.
- (4) A prior owner of lost or unclaimed property is entitled to the proceeds of the sale less all expenses incurred by the municipality if the prior owner makes a claim to the municipality within 90 days after the date of the sale.
- (5) If the sale proceeds are not claimed within 90 days from the date of sale, the rights of any prior owner to the sale proceeds are extinguished and the sale proceeds belong to the municipality.

Budget/Financial Implications:

Should Council approve this policy, there are no budget or financial implications.

Rationale for Recommendation:

The Municipality is committed to serving the residents of our region. Responsible tracking, retention, and disposition of lost or unclaimed property is an important part of our customer service program. The proposed Council policy will align with the MGA and support ongoing program delivery.

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government

Attachments:

1. FEM-020 - Lost or Unclaimed Property