Date: 2020-08-12

From: Kassie Rocca, Director of Finance

Subject: Online Payments

Report: FIN2020-09

Recommendation

That the report from Kassie Rocca, Director of Finance, regarding Online Payments be received, and

That Council of the Township of Georgian Bluffs approve installing eCommerce on the existing Township of Georgian Bluffs website at a cost of $2,150, and

The Council of the Township of Georgian Bluffs approves charging users a 3.5% administration fee when using online payments.

Background

Currently, the Township does not offer online payment options except for Water and Taxes. For water and taxes, ratepayers can use their online banking platforms to remit payment. All other payments are made through cheque, cash or debit. We do not accept credit card payments.

When our offices were closed to the public due to COVID, ratepayers had difficulties making payments for certain items as debit was unavailable, it was not recommended to leave cash in the drop box, and a lot of people no longer have cheques. To eliminate the need for ratepayers to come into the Township office to make a payment, staff began to research online payment options.
Analysis

The Township’s current website is operated through eSolutions. The website has the ability to setup an eCommerce account which would allow the Township to accept online payments.

Forms would be developed to facilitate the online payment. Ratepayers would be required to fill out the applicable form with the necessary information for treasury to process the payment. All payments processed, minus fees, are deposited directly into the Township’s bank account.

Esolutions charges a onetime implementation fee of $1,500 to set up the eCommerce account. An additional $650 is charged by eSolutions to train staff on eCommerce.

Fees for the actual processing of payments through eCommerce are:

- 3.5% on Visa/Mastercard payments
- $25/month
- $0.20 per transaction.

The credit card fee on a $15 dog tag equals $0.53. The credit card fee on a $2000 building permit equals $70. Credit card fees can add up quickly depending upon how often the online payment service is used and the amount of the transactions being processed. Staff recommend charging online payment users a 3.5% administration charge on all transactions to help cover the cost of any fees associated with the transactions. If ratepayers do not want to pay the fee, the usual methods of payment are still available which include attending our office and paying cash or debit, or submitting a cheque through the mail, in person or in our drop box.

Upon approval, staff will begin to develop forms and gradually move payments online. Water and tax payments will not be set up for payment through our website. Water and tax payments can be made online through the ratepayers’ online banking platform. Treasury will work with each department to determine the fees that can be set up for online payments.

Financial Impact

To set up online payments, there is a onetime installation fee of $1,500 and a $650 training fee. Ongoing costs will be $25/month for the eCommerce portal and $0.20 per transaction. Staff recommend charging a 3.5% administration fee for online payment transactions to assist in covering the costs.
Strategic Priorities

5.1 Enhance online services for more efficient customer service.
(a) Provide opportunity for on-line payments through the Township website.
(b) Allow credit card payments (not including property taxes).
(c) Create more online forms.

Conclusion

Staff recommend implementing online payments through eCommerce on our existing township website. An administration fee of 3.5% should be added to each transaction to assist in paying for the cost of this service.

Respectfully Submitted: Kassandra Rocca, Director of Finance
Reviewed by: John Norton, CAO