



DELEGATION RESPONSE

Meeting: January 26, 2026

Delegation from CArES

At a delegation on January 12th, CArES members requested that the town review its cat bylaw. CArES has specifically requested that the Town consider placing a limit to the number of cats that each household can have, licensing cats to could curb the issues of over crowding in the shelter, and getting a spay/Neuter Clinic. Town staff have met with CArES to follow-up on and confirm this request.

Administration has reviewed cat licensing in other municipalities, including Nanton, Coalhurst, Picture Butte, Granum, Taber, Diamond Valley, High River, Coaldale, Medicine Hat, Stirling, Pincer Creek, Fort MacLeod, Okotos; these towns, cities, hamlets and villages and can confirm that they do not have a cat licensing program.

Cochrane, Canmore, Banff, Edson and Brooks do have licensing fees, some are annually, some are a one time fee. The main reason for licensing is to make it easier to unite pet and owner for most communities. In most communities that do have a Cat Bylaw, the number of cats is determined, general consensus is a limit of 3-6. Administration would have concerns about enforcement or licensing from a management of that program standpoint and the time required.

The shelter is in place for the Town's enforcement of animal control and is not considered a sanctuary for all cats and dogs within the community. In addition, often animals from outside of Town are brought into the shelter as well. Tightening some of the restrictions, number of animals permitted within the shelter or length of time for adoption could be reduced as well.

Issues to consider:

- **Low Compliance:** Municipalities with mandatory cat licensing often see low compliance rates, sometimes less than 10-16% of households with cats. This suggests the programs are not effective in their goal of universal registration.
- **Cost vs. Revenue:** The cost of running and maintaining a cat licensing system and related animal control services can outweigh the revenue generated by licence fees. Lethbridge administration reported an annual program cost of up to \$300,000 with only a portion offset by fees.
- **Enforcement Challenges:** Enforcing cat bylaws, especially those that require cats to be contained to their owner's property, has been a significant challenge for peace officers. Some feel that regulating cats like dogs (e.g., leash laws) is not practical or effective.
- **Focus on Other Solutions:** Many municipalities are shifting focus to other solutions, such as encouraging spay/neuter programs (often at low or no cost), microchipping, and trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs for feral cat populations. Limiting numbers that the shelter will accept, shorten time frame for adoptions, etc. can also assist with regulating population.

Administration will require direction if more investigation or any amendments are recommended to the Cat Bylaw.

ATTACHMENTS: Cat Bylaw No. 1769

PREPARED BY: Chris Carr, CPO

APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney

DATE: January 19, 2026
