

Report to Committee of the Whole

Date: 2/10/2025
From: Chad Kean, Manager of Public Works
Re: Brush Amnesty Program for 2025

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive for information the report and proposed schedule for the 2025 Brush Amnesty Dates;

AND FURTHER THAT Committee direct staff to bring back the proposed schedule to the February 24th Regular Council Meeting and recommend that Council authorize staff to proceed with the Brush Amnesty Program at the landfill site for the days outlined in Schedule A of this report.

BACKGROUND

The brush amnesty program has been undertaken for several years and has been very well received and utilized by residents.

The increased amount of significant weather events over the last few years have attributed to residents dealing with more downed trees, broken limbs, and unwanted brush.

As such, this program is a method for residents to remove and dispose of the brush - free of charge – to keep their yards clean and do their part in continuing to keep our municipality looking beautiful.

ANALYSIS

In previous years, a cycle of 'Brush Amnesty Days' has been undertaken in Spring (April), Summer (June), and Fall (September).

Staff feel that the three (3) brush amnesty cycles would assist residents who wish to dispose of brush from their yards safely.

The current burning By-law prohibits some residents from the ability to burn clean brush within their own yards and this provides a safe alternative.

The brush that is brought to the landfill site can be burnt under the watch of staff, and staff have found this to be a cost-effective way to dispose of the brush.

Alternatively, the brush could be grinded and used as alternate cover material on the landfill waste. This option would be explored if the brush must be eradicated during a burn ban and/or to grind along with 'construction and demolition' debris.

It is noteworthy that grinding the brush for alternate cover or burning the brush are acceptable options outlined in the landfill's Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) issued by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MOECP).

Equally noteworthy, the landfill does accept grass clippings, weeds, and leaves at no charge to residents throughout the year, as these are composted and reused on site for cover material.

BUDGET/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The implication for budget is the cost to have a staff member watch over the fire while it burns down or to have the pile grinded by a third-party company. The cost for the first option is an hourly wage for staff time and the second would depend on the volume of material but it is normally an hourly rate of ~\$135 per hour.

Staff are exploring joint tenders with surrounding municipalities for grinding of materials that will be explored and presented to Council.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLANS:

On January 23, 2017, the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford passed By-Law 10-17, being a by-law to adopt the Merrickville-Wolford Strategic Plan 2017-2025.

The priorities of the strategic plan that can be linked to this report are as follows:

Ensuring efficient, effective services and civic engagement: By adapting to unusual circumstances as a result of more frequent inclement weather events and by providing additional brush amnesty days for residents of Merrickville-Wolford, the Village continues to provide efficient and effective services to residents taking into account evolving needs and environmental factors.

CONCLUSION

Staff are bringing this schedule forward, with the request for Committee of the Whole to recommend that Council approve the three cycles of brush amnesty days for 2025 as included in Schedule "A" to this report. This allows our residents to keep their yards clean and clear of brush debris with an incentive of no charge to drop the brush off at the landfill site on the days noted in the attachment as:

- First and Second Saturdays of April, June, and September 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule "A" - Brush Amnesty Days for 2025

Submitted by:

Chad Kean, Manager of Public Works

Approved by:

Darlene Plumley, CAO