

# Saanich Building and Bylaw Enforcement service delivery model fails to meet expectations

## Resident satisfaction plunges while costs soar.

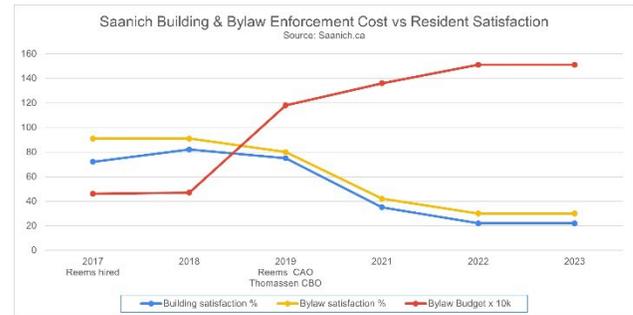
In 2020, the Saanich Council sought a solution for parking enforcement from Brent Reems, the Manager of Legislative Services. This responsibility was previously handled by a retiring Commissionaire contracted by the Saanich Police Department (SPD). In a briefing note dated January 20, 2020, the SPD requested that the Mayor transfer parking enforcement duties to the administrative division.

On January 22, 2021, Reems submitted report 1970-20 to the Council, proposing the creation of a Bylaw Enforcement Manager position, three new Bylaw Enforcement Officials (BEOs), an administrator, new ticketing software, support equipment, and vehicles. The total request amounted to \$446,000 in capital and \$293,000 in annual costs to facilitate this change in parking enforcement. The Council approved this funding and new enforcement model without any inquiries.

The new bylaw service delivery model was implemented on May 1, 2021. Since then, no publicly available evaluations of the service model have been conducted. The addition of the new BEOs was justified by a reported 400% increase in parking complaints. The financial model relied on the assumption that a BEO would issue 2,327 tickets per year, based on the performance of a single SPD contractor during a particularly productive year in 2019, when 4,145 tickets were issued.

However, information obtained through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Saanich records indicates that the costs of bylaw enforcement service delivery have tripled since 2018, resident satisfaction with building and bylaw enforcement services is at an all-time low,

and the combined number of parking tickets issued by the BEOs has not yet reached the total issued by a single SPD contractor in 2019. The three new BEOs are issuing fewer than 3,000 parking tickets annually, which is 57% less than projected, at a cost of over \$100 per \$50 parking ticket issued.



Given this situation, one may question what the 11 BEOs, costing \$1.5 million per year, are doing in Saanich besides failing to write parking tickets. Court documents and FOI responses reveal some of their unapproved activities, which include:

- Penalizing over 20 residents with notices on their property titles for unpermitted work, some cases dating back decades.
- Expanding their authority through “housekeeping” motions in council, gradually transferring building code enforcement responsibilities to bylaw officials.
- Ignoring the requirements outlined in the 2018 Saanich Bylaw Enforcement Policy by initiating investigations into secondary suites.
- Forcibly entering residences to investigate building and zoning complaints.

Given these findings, it is evident that the building and bylaw enforcement service delivery model is failing. A proposal should be made to return building and zoning enforcement responsibilities to certified building officials and to develop a new model for bylaw and parking enforcement services.