

**Subject:** FW: Business Licence Inquiry

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**From:** Chris Baker <cbaker@cumberland.ca>

**Sent:** February 24, 2026 1:41 PM

**To:** coastsurfshop@gmail.com

**Subject:** Business Licence Inquiry

Hello Jesse Dewhirst,

Thank you for taking the time to write and for sharing your concerns regarding the late fee associated with the 2026 business licence renewal. I appreciate your ongoing commitment to the downtown business community and the perspective you bring forward.

Please know that it is not our intention for the renewal process to feel punitive or unsupportive. The late-fee structure was introduced to support fairness and to reduce the amount of staff time spent following up on overdue licences. Ensuring that renewals are submitted on time allows those resources to be focused on improving service and efficiency for all business owners.

I understand your concerns about the size of the fee and the timing of the renewal period during a busy retail season. While reminders are provided as a courtesy to help support on-time payments, the requirement to renew by the deadline applies to all licence holders under Bylaw No. 1239. In this case, the late fee has been applied in accordance with the bylaw.

Thank you again for bringing your feedback forward in such a thoughtful way. Both your email and this reply will be included in the council reader for their consideration.

Kind regards,

**Chris Baker** (he/him) | Manager of Permits, Licensing and Bylaw

p: 250-336-3009 e: [cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)

**Village of Cumberland**

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**From:** Coast Surf Shop Ltd <[coastsurfshop@gmail.com](mailto:coastsurfshop@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** February 24, 2026 1:05 PM

**To:** Village of Cumberland <[info@cumberland.ca](mailto:info@cumberland.ca)>

**Subject:** attention Mayor and Council

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing this email in regards to our business licence renewal late fee of \$75. We feel that is a very unreasonable charge and are frustrated that this has been added to our \$100 business licence renewal fee.

We are proud to have a business in Cumberland since 2020, and feel that this is unsupportive to the business community.

We understand that you are trying to encourage businesses to pay on time, however there needs to be a more reasonable late fee structure. I would understand an increase of a 2-10% after 30 days with a more extreme late fee after that. Understanding that there is frustration at Village office for some businesses not paying and feel that those businesses that neglect to pay after a 30 day grace period could be further penalized.

I understand there was an email sent out warning to pay however the timing of the licence needing to be paid Dec 31 is something that fell off the radar during a busy retail season where we are balancing running our small businesses, family commitments as well as participating in village events.

Unfortunately this fee structure has been discussed among other downtown businesses and there is a feeling of unfairness shared among us all.

We understand that there will be further penalties added to our accounts by March 2 and we hope to hear a positive resolution before then.

Thank you,  
Jesse Dewhirst

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Cheers, Jesse D  
Coast Surf Shop  
250-941-1600  
[www.coastsurfshop.com](http://www.coastsurfshop.com)

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**Subject:** FW: Business Licensing Inquiry

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**From:** Chris Baker <[cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)>  
**Sent:** February 26, 2026 12:18 PM  
**To:** Allison Mackenzie <[info@darksidechocolates.com](mailto:info@darksidechocolates.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Business Licensing Inquiry

Hi Allison,

Thank you for reaching out for clarification. I certainly do not want to see any disruption to your business licence, so I encourage you to submit the outstanding amount prior to the deadline. If your licence expires due to unpaid fees you will be required to reapply.

As per your request, both your email and my reply will be included in the council reader for their consideration. Council may choose from a number of options when addressing concerns brought to their attention.

Thank you,

**Chris Baker** (he/him) | Manager of Permits, Licensing and Bylaw

p: 250-336-3009 e: [cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)

**Village of Cumberland**

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**From:** Allison Mackenzie <[info@darksidechocolates.com](mailto:info@darksidechocolates.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 26, 2026 11:21 AM  
**To:** Chris Baker <[cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)>; Village of Cumberland <[info@cumberland.ca](mailto:info@cumberland.ca)>  
**Subject:** Re: Business Licensing Inquiry

Thanks for your quick response Chris.

With a deadline looming, I wanted to clarify, that while Mayor and Council are considering my (and i'm sure others') appeal to waive this late fee and/ or amend the bylaw to at least add a grace period, if not a more lawful penalty, that said deadline would be extended or put on hold until a decision is made.

To speak to your reply, I understand there may have been delinquent cases in the past, but comparing situations of "licences (that) went unpaid in some cases for many years" to being slightly late, after paying annually for years feels a stretch, and I just cannot see how \$75 was required to "recover" my marginally overdue fees. is the \$75 trying to recoup costs from the licences that went unpaid for years?

Please include this as part of the correspondence in the council reader.

Thank you,

Allison

On Mon, Feb 23, 2026 at 11:57 AM Chris Baker <[cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)> wrote:

Hello Allison,

Thank you for taking the time to write and for sharing your concerns regarding the late fee introduced under Bylaw No. 1239. I appreciate your long-standing presence in the downtown business community and recognize the importance of your perspective.

Please know that it is not our intention for the renewal process to feel punitive or unsupportive to the small businesses that form the foundation of our downtown. The new structure implemented this past fall aimed to streamline administrative processes and increase fairness. Having fees paid on time supports these goals.

In the past, licences went unpaid in some cases for many years, which created an unfair situation for those who paid on time. It also resulted in staff time being used for enforcement and follow up of unpaid fees. It is our intention to refocus this staff time on increasing efficiencies in the application process.

The staff time spent by finance and bylaw staff to recover overdue fees is not accounted for elsewhere in the business licensing fee structure. The application of a late fee ensures that those costs are supported by licence holders and are not passed along to taxpayers in the rest of the community.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to our attention in such a thoughtful and constructive way. Both your original message and my reply, will be included in the council reader for their consideration.

For context the following was included with the last payment reminder:

*Thank you for contacting us. A late fee was applied to your business licence account because we did not receive the renewal payment before the December 31, 2025 deadline. Business Licensing and Regulation Bylaw No. 1239, 2025, adopted by Council in November 2025, outlines the renewal requirements and associated late fees. Notices were sent in advance to highlight the payment deadline and the consequences of late submission.*

*To ensure fairness among all licence holders, the same standards must be consistently applied. Businesses with unpaid fees as of January 31, 2026 will have their licences cancelled, and a new application will be required to continue operations. As your business reached out regarding the fee and has been awaiting a response, we have extended the deadline to pay all outstanding fees to **March 2, 2026**.*

Kind regards,

**Chris Baker** (he/him) | Manager of Permits, Licensing and Bylaw  
p: 250-336-3009 e: [cbaker@cumberland.ca](mailto:cbaker@cumberland.ca)  
**Village of Cumberland**

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**From:** Allison Mackenzie <[info@darksidechocolates.com](mailto:info@darksidechocolates.com)>  
**Sent:** February 20, 2026 1:11 PM  
**To:** Village of Cumberland <[info@cumberland.ca](mailto:info@cumberland.ca)>  
**Subject:** To Mayor and Council

Hello, I'm writing to address the late fees introduced in Bylaw no. 1239.

As a downtown retailer my business licence renewal costs \$100, if I am late paying that, I now incur a \$75 late fee immediately, which I believe to be unnecessarily punitive and also likely beyond what is considered a "reasonable amount" legally. There is also no grace period, or any terms extended.

At this point, though my licence renewal fee has been paid, there is an outstanding \$75 late fee on my account, and the additional pressure that if I don't pay that fee by March 2nd, my licence will be canceled and I will be required to submit a new application (which would then cost \$275). I've been operating my business in Cumberland for near 15 years, and this is the first time I've had this much trouble with renewing my licence.

I understand there was a new fee structure put in place this past fall, but I do think this blanket late fee is an oversight. It definitely doesn't feel supportive to the small businesses that operate in our downtown, of whom I've spoken to a handful of, and they are also reeling from this 75% penalty.

I went ahead and did a quick look into a few other municipalities and their fee structure, and from what I can gather, not one so far is comparable.

- Courtenay charges \$100, after due date \$25 fee is applied, after 3 months it goes up to \$50- Comox charges \$100 and from what I can glean, they apply a 10% late fee after 6 months
- Parksville charges \$150, after 30 days \$50 fee is charged.
- Sidney charges \$100 for initial application, and has **zero** renewal fee and obviously no late fees
- Ucluelet charges \$35 and if late, the licence expires and needs to be reapplied for \$35 again

Can this late fee be waived for myself and others? Can amendments be made to this bylaw so as not to be so punitive?

Thank you, Allison

Allison MacKenzie  
Dark Side Chocolates  
Cumberland, BC  
250.336.0126