

Staff Report

Report From: Deanna Hastie, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

Meeting Date: September 9, 2024

Subject: Community Grant Process Review

Attachment(s): 1. Draft Community Grant Policy

Recommendation:

That Goderich Town Council receive this report for information and approve the attached proposed Community Grant Policy.

And Further That Goderich Town Council authorize staff to proceed with the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Goderich Little Theatre that clearly defines the level and type of support to be provided, and the term of the support.

Report Summary:

Staff have reviewed the Community Grant process and propose the following changes:

- Add the requirement that organizations must have demonstrated support from some source other than public funds
- Add Active Transportation as an eligible category
- Create a maximum level of financial support (a \$5,000 figure has been included for consideration)
- Separate the process for in-kind support for festivals and events and in-kind capital project support
- Add a requirement that Municipal support must be acknowledged in any printed or promotional material
- Create a Review Team that consists of the Director of Corporation Services/Treasurer, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk and Director of Community Services. The Review Team will evaluate each application and provide a recommendation to Council.

Background/Analysis:

Council considers Community Grant applications annually as part of the budget process. Staff have reviewed the Town's Community Grant process and created a policy that provides a framework for the submission and evaluation of applications for a Community Grant.

The implementation of a maximum request is one of the proposed changes. Based on requests submitted in prior years, this limit will impact the following organizations that request grants annually more than this maximum:

- Alexandra Marine & General Hospital Foundation \$10,000
- Goderich Celtic Roots Festival and College \$10,000 request (\$8,000 approved)
- United Way \$8,000
- Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation \$6,000
- Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health \$10,000
- Goderich Little Theatre \$15,000

Each year there have been other non-reoccurring requests that exceed this \$5,000 maximum as well. The proposal of a \$5,000 limit is supported by financial pressures experienced in the budget process. Implementation of this limit may allow the overall budget for Community Grants to be reduced.

The Town has provided annual support to Goderich Little Theatre in the amount of \$15,000 for several years. This group has completed a Community Grant application annually to provide information regarding anticipated projects. Funding for this grant comes from the Cultural Reserve not taxation. Staff are proposing that support for the Goderich Little Theatre be considered separately from the Community Grant process. A Memorandum of Understanding could be considered to clearly identify the level and type of support to be provided and the term of the support.

The proposed changes also include removing the Festivals and Events in-kind support process from the Community Grant program. A recommendation to provide staff with the authority to approve the in-kind support given to festivals and events through the Special Events Application process is provided for consideration. The Community Grant application would only involve capital project in-kind support requests. In-kind support for festivals and events generally involves the provision of picnic tables and additional garbage receptacles. These requests come in at various times of the year as organizations plan their events. Providing staff with the authority to assist the events that comply with the Town's Special Events Policy would allow them flexibility to work with each organization and manage available resources in a timely manner.

Linkages:

- Corporate Strategic Plan Priority #2: Welcoming and Caring Community
- Corporate Strategic Plan Priority #3: Strong Local Economy

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

The financial impact of this report is the budgeted Community Grant allocation and the value of any approved in-kind support.

2024 Community Grant budget (taxation)	\$133,000 including \$75,000 Hospital commitment
Supported by Cultural Reserve	\$15,000 – Goderich Little Theatre
Supported by Water Exp Reserve Fund	\$6,000 – Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation
TOTAL	\$154,000

Approved By: Janice Hallahan, Chief Administrative Officer
Andrea Fisher, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk