



STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Strategic Priorities and Policy Standing Committee

Report to: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors
From: Keith Hearst, Grant and Policy Writer
Standing Committee Date: April 2, 2024
Report Number: LS-2024-011
Council Meeting Date: April 24, 2024
Subject: **Municipal Community Grants**

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1. Recommendation:

THAT Council authorize staff to enter Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's) with long-term grant recipients; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to develop a Concert Hall Room Allocation policy; and

FURTHER THAT Council review each other Community Grant Funding request in order to allocate funding

2. Executive Summary:

On January 31, 2024, Council approved that \$30,000 of the 2024 Operating Budget be allocated to the Municipal Community Grants program. This funding was without any specific allocation with the direction to staff to enter into MOUs with grant applicants who are deemed long-term recipients through the annual grant program.

In reviewing all the applications received during the community grants process, staff determined that five (5) of the applicants can be deemed long-term in-kind grant recipients. An additional two (2) applicants were also determined to be long-

term cash grant recipients. MOUs can be negotiated for these applicants. Other in-kind funding requests may also be addressed through policy. As many of the in-kind requests are for booking the Concert Hall at Victoria Hall, the development of a room allocation policy may help to further alleviate the volume of grant requests each year and address calls for in-kind support.

All cash funding approval must be approved by Council and each applicant will have the opportunity to present their applications to Council in-person. This will provide the opportunity for a more fulsome review of the requests for Funding under the Municipal Community Grants program.

3. Background

The Municipal Community Grants program is an annual grant program that provides non-profit and community-based organizations with modest levels of funding for projects and programs that improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Recipients can request either cash funding or in-kind support for community projects, operating expenses, special and community events, parking permits and facility rentals.

The Town of Cobourg received twenty-one (21) grant applications for the 2024 Municipal Community Grant program. The total amount requested between all twenty-one (21) applicants was \$81,347.46. Of the twenty-one (21) applicants, nine (9) applications were for in-kind grants and twelve (12) were for cash funds.

On the January 31, 2024, regular council meeting the following motion was carried:

FURTHER THAT Council only approve \$30,000 in Community Grants funding without specific grant allocations to community organizations in the 2024 Operating Budget, and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to bring forward a report to Council on individual memorandums of understanding (MOU) on long-term in-kind grant request recipients to eliminate the yearly grant requests from these groups to be brought back for Council approval; and

FURHTER THAT Council direct staff to bring back each community grant application and supporting materials separately who are outside of the long-term in-kind grant recipients for an individual vote on funding approval by Council for each application.

Following this motion from Council, staff reviewed all the applicants for the 2024 Municipal Community Grants Program to determine which applicants would fall under the scope of long-term in-kind grant request recipients.

Seven (7) applicants were highlighted as long-term grant recipients, while twelve (12) applicants to be brought back to council for final decisions on funding. One (1) applicant, the Cobourg Highland Games Society withdrew their application as they have changed the location of the Highland Games for 2024 to Port Hope.

4. Discussion:

Staff separated all the in-kind grants from the cash funding requests to determine which grant applicants' submissions could be resolved with an MOU or alternative method and which would need to be brought forward to Council. Based on Council's direction there are seven (7) applicants that can have their requests resolved through the adoption of MOUs between the applicant and the Town. This would alleviate the necessity of these applicants to apply for an in-kind grant every year as per our Municipal Community Grants Policy.

Under the existing policy, applicants were required to reapply for their grants each year. Requiring each applicant to reapply each year was to ensure a transparent and consistent method to determine the distribution of grant funding from the Town each year. However, requiring applicants to reapply each year for the same purpose can be onerous for the applicant.

To alleviate the onus of the long-term in-kind grant recipients to reapply for the community grants program, MOUs can be developed to provide longer-term support from the Town. The adoption of separate MOUs for each of the long-term recipients will end the requirement to reapply for the Municipal Community Grant program each year. MOUs for long-term annual grant applicants can be negotiated with these applicants.

The list of long-term in-kind grant recipients is as follows:

- Cobourg and District Historical Society
- Cobourg Ecology Garden
- Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club
- Victoria Hall Volunteers
- Victorian Operetta Society

In addition to the list of the long-term in-kind grant recipients, the Town has also contributed cash amount to two (2) other community organizations as noted below. Staff recommend that these relationships also be taken out of the yearly Community Grant process and direct Staff to enter into MOUs with these organizations as well.

The list of long-term cash grant recipients is as follows:

- Cobourg Museum Foundation – Property Taxes

- Cobourg Ecology Garden

All other in-kind grant applicants were not determined to be long-term in-kind grant recipients based on prior records on community grant submissions.

The list of remaining in-kind grant recipients is as follows:

- Ontario Youth Parliament
- Film Access Northumberland (Eye2Eye)
- Green Wood Coalition

The most common in-kind grant applicants request space from the Town to utilize for their organization at no cost, but there could be a cost to the Town if there is another organization wishing to book the space at pay the applicable fees associated with it. As with any venue space, there are times where there are non-premium booking times, in which the Concert Hall is not normally booked, and these times could be used by non-profits as those times would be sitting vacant. The development of a new Concert Hall Allocation Policy would provide clarity and time for in-kind applicants that are seeking in-kind contributions to book the Concert Hall at Victoria Hall. Requests for in-kind contributions to book time in the Concert Hall make up the majority of in-kind requests each year. Developing a policy for the allocation of the Concert Hall and other venues can help to provide a clear guide for these applicants regarding booking. To keep in-line with the Municipal Community Grants policy and guidelines, the allocation policy would only apply to registered charities and non-profit organizations.

All the remaining applications for cash funding will be permitted to submit their applications to Council again for consideration. It will be Council's decision to allocate the \$30,000 set aside for the community grants program. Each applicant will have the opportunity to present their applications in front of Council to appeal for funding. Each application will have to be weighed to allocate the \$30,000 of approved funding to have the greatest impact for the community.

The list of remaining Cash Grant Recipients is as follows:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northumberland
- Community Care Northumberland
- Horizon of Friendship
- Northumberland Hills Stitchery Guild
- Northumberland Hispanic Cultural Club
- Northumberland Humane Society
- Northumberland Oral Health Coalition
- Northumberland Pride
- Northumberland Fare Share Food Bank

5. Financial Impact and Budget

The total funding requests for the 2024 Municipal Community Grants program was \$81,347.46 which amounts to a nearly \$30,000 increase in total requests from 2023 (\$51,852). There were 21 total applicants for the program. The breakdown of the allocation of funding requests is as follows:

Type of Request	Total Amount Requested
Long-term in-kind grant recipients	\$11,291.65
Long-term cash grant recipients	\$9,500
In-kind grant application	\$5,332.81
Cash grant applicants	\$44,225
Ineligible applicants	\$5,500
Withdrawn applicants	\$5,498
Total Requested Amount =	\$81,347.46

Both the long-term in-kind and cash grant recipients will be covered through negotiated MOUs with the Town. While the other in-kind grant applicants can be responded to through policy. The development of a Concert Hall Allocation policy can assign times for in-kind applicants to use the concert hall in off-peak hours when the hall would not normally be rented out for events or concerts. However, one of this year's in-kind applicants, the Ontario Youth Parliament, has already had their event and paid for their room booking. If Council chooses to fund this request, it will have to be a cash reimbursement for the use of the courtroom at Victoria Hall.

The request from the remaining eligible cash grant applicants amounts to \$44,225. Council has allocated a total of \$30,000 from the 2024 Operating Budget for the Municipal Community Grants program, which amounts to approximately 68% of the total eligible cash funding requests. Council must determine how to allocate the available funding across the remaining applicants to ensure the greatest positive impact for the community.

In addition, it should be noted that the Town also contributes funding to various other long-standing community-based organizations through MOU's and Lease Agreements. Council may want to also in the future to direct Staff to provide an overview and summary of these contributions and long-standing funding and support agreements, which may be way beyond \$80,000.

6. Relationship to Council’s Strategic Plan Priorities 2023 to 2027 and beyond:

Thriving Community

The Municipal Community Grants program falls under the thriving community pillar of Council’s Strategic Plan. The grant program provides support for various charitable and non-profit community organizations that provide benefits for all residents and visitors to Cobourg. The program demonstrates an investment on the part of the Town in programs and services that reach beyond the scope of the Town to encourage active lifestyles for all age groups. Providing funding to local community organizations also demonstrate a care and willingness from the Town to help these organizations flourish and succeed.

Service Excellence

Sustainability

7. Public Engagement:

N/A

8. Attachments:

N/A

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Municipal Community Grants.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 26, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk / Director of Legislative Services - Mar 26, 2024 - 11:48 AM

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Mar 26, 2024 - 2:40 PM