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Town of Aurora

Committee of the Whole Report

No. CMS25-012

Subject: Community Partnership Grant – Status Update and Recommendations for Future

Prepared by: Lisa Warth, Manager, Recreation

Department: Community Services

Date: May 13, 2025

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS25-012 be received; and
2. That Council endorse the recommendations contained in this report for the future management of the Community Partnership Grant; and
3. That the Community Partnership Grant Policy be amended as set out in this report.

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the current status of the Community Partnership Grant Fund and recommendations for the future management of the fund.

- The Community Partnership Grant has picked up significant traction since its' creation in 2023. \$72,177.72 has been distributed in 2025 to date, leaving \$2,422.28 in funding for the remainder of the year.
- Several recommendations are being proposed to manage the grant in future.

Background

The Community Partnership Grant was created in April 2023 to support Recreation and Culture organizations and individuals that serve the Town of Aurora. The grant is a merger of the former Recreation and Culture grant and the Sponsorship of Community Events program. The total annual budget for this program is \$89,600 which is a combined total of the amounts allocated to the previous programs. No new money has

been added since the creation of the new program and of the \$89,600, \$13,000 is allocated to the Chamber of Commerce and \$2,000 is allocated to the John West memorial scholarship, leaving \$74,600 to allocate to Community grant applications each year.

Analysis

The Community Partnership Grant has picked up significant traction since its creation in 2023. \$72,177.72 has been distributed in 2025 to date, leaving \$2,422.28 in funding for the remainder of the year.

Community awareness of the grant has grown significantly over the past two years and the number of applications is growing quickly. Most applications meet the criteria and would have meaningful community impact by fostering physical activity, building strong connections and creating a sense of belonging in the community, enriching lives through culture, arts and heritage, and fostering leadership skills among other benefits.

Two intakes for 2025 have taken place (December 2024, for projects taking place the following year, and March 2025). Through these two intakes, \$72,177.72 has been approved and distributed to worthy community projects. This leaves only \$2,422.28 for the remainder of the year. \$200,060 in eligible applications were requested between these two intakes.

The final two intakes are scheduled for June 1 and September 1. The remaining funds will be distributed during the June intake and the September intake will be cancelled.

The Community Partnership Grant policy (attached) does state that if funds are exhausted in the calendar year prior to year end, applications will no longer be accepted.

Several recommendations are being proposed to manage the grant in future.

In order to get the most out of the grant funding and ensure maximum community impact, staff are suggesting the following changes to the Community Partnership Grant policy:

- The annual maximum amount granted to any one organization shall be capped at \$7,000. Previously, the maximum annual grant amount was \$10,000.
- That two intakes per year take place annually in December (for the next year) and April for the remainder of the year.

- That the community partnership grant fund no more than 75 per cent of the cost of a project (or a maximum of \$7,000). Applicants are encouraged to find alternate funding sources for their projects.

Advisory Committee Review

None

Legal Considerations

None

Financial Implications

A total of \$89,600 has been allotted within the operating budget for this purpose. Of this amount, \$2,000 is funded from the John West Memorial Scholarship reserve fund with the remainder funded by the tax levy.

Communications Considerations

Advertisements, enewsletters and social media messages are used to promote the intake for applications for the community grant. If the proposed recommendations are approved, the Town's website and associated campaigns will be updated.

Climate Change Considerations

The actions from this report do not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

The Community Partnership grant supports the following Strategic Plan goals and key objectives:

Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- Invest in sustainable infrastructure
- Celebrating and promoting our culture

- Encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle
- Strengthening the fabric of our community

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may decide to increase the annual funding for the Community Partnership grant.

Conclusions

The Community Partnership grant is an excellent way for the Town to accomplish some of the goals in the Corporate Strategic Plan which otherwise may be challenging to achieve with the limited resources the Town has.

By partnering with community organizations and individuals, and pooling resources, the Town is able to foster a healthy, thriving, vibrant community and meet the diverse needs of our residents.

Attachments

1. Community Partnership Grant Policy

Previous Reports

Report No. CMS25-003 – Community Partnership Grant – 2024 Year in Review, February 11, 2025

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on April 24, 2025

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer