



STAFF REPORT

Title: Notice of Motion - Grant Committee

Meeting Date: August 22, 2023

Executive Summary:

At the August 8, 2023 regular meeting of Council, Councillor Lefebvre brought forth the following notice of motion for consideration at Council's August 22, 2023 regular meeting of Council:

That Council direct Administration to bring forward, for Council's consideration, amendments to the necessary bylaws and policies that would ensure applications made for grants funded by the City of Cold Lake will be considered by all members of Council, whether sitting as members of a committee, or during regular meetings of Council; and that meetings during which grant applications may be considered be held on a monthly basis, excepting the summer months.

Background:

Administrative Comments and Observations:

There has been a clear shift from 2020, in the number of events being held and hosted in the community. This program has been very successful making Cold Lake a destination. That being said, this shift is having its own cause and effect both positive and negative.

From a positive perspective, these community events are providing commerce, economic impacts, and quality of life attributes to the Community. In contrast, events also generate complaints such as noise, traffic, parking, alcohol usage, competition (of commerce, volunteers, and patrons).

- Interactions with the public consistently want to see quick turn around on program and services, this includes request for funding. As an example, at a few recent EDAC meetings, the committee could not be held do to not achieving quorum. This delay by a few weeks resulted in complaints from businesses and workers making application to become foreign workers at various local businesses. Please note that this is only an example and examples exist in various departments, programs and services.



- The rejected approval of financial supports to individuals and organizations seem to be few and far between. That being said, the amount of funding and/or ask seems to vary between organizations. All organizations that have made request for funding through the committee has been required to fill in applications and are refused if incomplete however when City Council considers the same, formal applications tend to be less important. With that, administration is hesitant to enforce this and this sometimes does become a frustration to the individual or organization that is seeking funding.

If there is an expectation of Council that all applications of a certain priority and funding be approved, framework can be generated to provide automatic approvals as such (meeting certain application minimums). This could greatly reduce Red Tape but would require budget recognition.

- With significantly increasing applications from individuals and organizations, will it be reasonable for volunteers sitting on committees to work long hours and/or increasing frequency of committee meetings. There is concerns with volunteer burnout. Further, should Council also consider stipends/compensation for volunteers?
- Administration appreciates that there is satisfaction of having a personal attachment to the decisions and the individuals and organizations that receive the funding.
- There is concern that the Community Recreation, Art, Culture and Heritage Investment Grant Program is not properly funded. In effort to significantly increase funding in this regard, the City will have to consider increasing taxes or shift funding from other programs and services (of which may have impacts to other programs and services).
- In theory, as it stands (by policy), the Committee should reject all further applications do to the budget being exhausted. That being said, with recent approvals, Council has not signaled this approach for various reasons.
- The issue raised by the "Notice of Motion" referencing *"should Council continue to levy property taxes with the purpose of using an increasing portion of the revenue to grant to organizations and individuals, or should this money be left with the taxpayer so that the taxpayer can make their own decisions regarding its use, whether that use be charitable or not?.....Remembering the principle that there is only one taxpayer, council should be aware that there is a burden created by Council's generosity that is ultimately shouldered by the residents and businesses who pay property taxes in our jurisdiction."* should be considered in



conjunction with the policy and further refine expectation as it relates to private for profit ventures. These can be considered in policy amendments and will form part of the discussion when the policy returns for ratification (Subject to Council ratifying the motion and direction to administration).

Based on the “Notice of Motion, there are no immediate changes and therefore administration recommends that Council pass the motion. The direction will result administration bring forth various amendments to policies and bylaws, based on the “Notice of Motion” for Council’s consideration.

Alternatives:

Recommended Action:

That Council direct Administration to bring forward, for Council’s consideration, amendments to the necessary bylaws and policies that would ensure applications made for grants funded by the City of Cold Lake will be considered by all members of Council, whether sitting as members of a committee, or during regular meetings of Council; and that meetings during which grant applications may be considered be held on a monthly basis, excepting the summer months.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer