



STAFF REPORT

Title: Recreation, Culture, Arts and Heritage Grant Program for Schools

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

Executive Summary:

During Council's regular meeting of September 12, 2023, discussion ensued on the subject of "Request for Funding" applications for activities relating to school divisions. Two (2) specific applications included an application from the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Art Smith Aviation Academy of the Northern Lights School Division (NLSD) and the second from teachers of the Lakeland Catholic School Division.

It was administrations advice that policy discussion should be had relating to applications from School Districts who of which (under the provincial education system) are funded by the Province of Alberta. Portions of the education budget is also funded by local property taxes of which the Government of Alberta requisitions these funds from the local governments. With that, it is understood that various "field trips" are had by most school grades. Further some "field trips" are funded by the school districts, while others are funded either by school fees, specific fees, and/or fundraising.

This report is intended to have Council provide some framework for feedback on the intentions of the Community Recreation, Art, Culture, and Heritage Investment Grant Policy Grant Program as it relates to School Districts, Schools, and Parent Advisory Councils.

Background:

For reference purposes, the following are school districts within the City of Cold Lake:

- Northern Lights School Division No. 69
 - Art Smith Aviation Academy
 - Cold Lake Middle School
 - Cold Lake Outreach School
 - North Star Elementary School
 - Cold Lake High School
 - Cold Lake Elementary School
 - Nelson Heights Middle School
 - Ardmore School (Municipal District of Bonnyville)
- Lakeland Catholic School District No. 15



- Holy Cross Elementary School
- Assumption Junior/Senior School
- Saint Dominic Elementary School

- East Central Franophone School District
 - Ecole Voyageur

- Lakeland Christian Academy
 - Lakeland Christian Academy on 10 Street

The two (2) recent applications included:

- Northern Lights School District - Art Smith Aviation School (Parent Advisory Council) requested for financial assistance for much needed equipment for the school and reduction in school fees.
 - Equipment Grant \$2,500 – The request for financial assistance would be for the purchase of following school equipment:
 - School Jerseys
 - Pickleball Equipment
 - Soccer Equipment
 - Volleyball Equipment, and
 - Badminton Equipment

 - Travel Grant \$1,000 – The request for financial assistance is to help offset some of the costs associated with traveling for the school band. The Art Smith Aviation Academy attends music festivals in Edmonton, Red Deer and Lloydminster. The fees associated with hiring a bus is in the order of magnitude for \$1,800 for each two (2) day event.
- Although this program is an option for some grades there are others that are required to take band. As noted above, the travel grant would assist in offsetting these fees.
- Other Grant \$3,500 – Concerns in regards to the age of music equipment that was previously donated to the school is requiring financial assistance. This includes some of the following:
 - Reeds
 - Instrument Repair and Upkeep
 - Trombone Stands



- Tuba Holders
- Purchase of Music and Music Books
- Purchase of Ukuleles
- Purchase of Digital Piano

The above noted request was respectfully declined; however, Administration did advise that it would facilitate some policy discussion for Council.

- Lakeland Catholic School District No. 15 - Assumption Junior/Senior High School Representatives Lynné Vining, Principal Elaine Ernst, and Band Director requested for financial assistance in attending a Concert Band Trip.
 - Travel Grant \$1,000 – The request for financial assistance is to help offset some of the costs associated with travel for the Concert Band Trip in Toronto Niagara Falls. Due to the significant cost associated with this trip it is difficult to keep it affordable for all students.

The above noted request was postponed so that Council may have further policy discussion.

In the implementation of the program, it was not Administrations intent to include school districts in certain components of the program. That being said, and to be clear, Section 4.2.11 of the Recreation, Culture, Arts and Heritage Grant Program pretty much allows anyone and everyone to apply for funding.

“The City of Cold Lake is always interested in hearing from the community and community groups relating to any and all ideas for bonefide Community Recreation Arts, Culture and Heritage Investments initiatives that may not be covered under an existing policy or program offered by the City of Cold Lake or is excluded based on the criteria of an existing policy/program, the organization may wish to make an application.....”

It is in essence a political decision as to whether Council was to fund initiatives or not.

Each school district is an entity its self. With that, each school district has several schools within the geographic context of the Recreation, Culture, Arts and Heritage Grant Program Policy (with the exception of the Lakeland Christian Academy) and within each school there are several grades. Further many grades also may have multiple different equivalent classes (e.g. Grade 1A and Grade 1B and so on).

Further to the above, each school also has various interest activities, clubs, etc. (e.g. sports, band, art, drama, environmental, etc.). It is understood that various interest



activities may have associated school fees and/or specific fees for specific activities, field trips, events, etc. There are also various levels of fundraising commitment to each of these.

Administration may amend its marketing of the program (based on Council direction) so that all schools and grades may make applications to the program for events, equipment and transportation as the case maybe, that being said and using the context of the above, administration is concerned with the potential volume of requests that could result. It is anticipated that each school and each class may have various specific activities, field trips, events, that educators would be interested in receiving financial assistance.

Administration is seeking feedback from Council on School Districts, Schools and each Grade, and Parent Advisory Councils being eligible to apply for each of the funding categories:

- Development Incentive Grant
- Community Event Grant
- Major Community/Tourism Event Grant
- Travel Grant
- Equipment Grant
- Leadership Grant
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage Grant
- Screened Based Production Grant
- Community Fundraising Gala Event
- Other Structure Fundraising and Sponsorship
- Other Recreation, Art, Culture, and Heritage Investments

Again, administration may amend its marketing approach to provide clearer messaging for educators.

Based on administrations perspective, there could be significant quantity of grant applications. If Council would like to support various schools initiatives, perhaps it is better that the City of Cold Lake make simply provide financial transfers directly to the School Districts and/or Schools to support costs for specific initiatives such travel expenses and/or equipment expenses. The schools and/or school district could provide annual receipts to comply with financial transfers. The following are only intended to be quick examples of formulas:

- \$XXXXXXX per school,
- \$XXXXXXX per grade,



- \$XXXXXXX per student, etc.

Within the details there may be concerns with the City providing funding in certain programs, services, equipment, etc. to the provincial education system.

Administration anticipates that some may raise concerns in that the Province of Alberta currently requisitions funding for the education system through the municipal property taxes. With that, it is anticipated that concerns will be raised whether municipalities should be providing financial assistance directly to school districts, schools, and/or school parent advisory councils for certain programming and activities. This perspective will articulate that the province may adjust its budgets and property tax requisition for fees on municipal property taxes.....why is the municipality doing this?

Further to the above, when a taxable property is sold within the municipality, the purchaser is required to file a “School Support Notice” with the municipality. There is choice of the property owners for where the education property tax will be assigned to. This information is submitted to the Province.

We’ve attached an information bulletin for reference purposes, it articulates that “The Constitution Act” establishes Alberta’s public and separate school systems on the basis of religion (either Protestant or Roman Catholic). School Boards and tax-collecting authorities are allowed and required to ask for the declaration.

This is not negating the opportunity for municipalities to provide financial assistance School Districts, Schools and Parent Advisory Councils. But there will be differing perspectives of the matter. In end, no amendments may be necessary and only new market material is required.

It should be noted that the City of Cold Lake has historically provided funding to new playground projects that are typically led by PAC’s as Province of Alberta does not provide adequate funding for such amenities for school children.

Alternatives:

The report has been generated to solicit feedback for potential policy amendments.

Recommended Action:

The report has been generated to solicit feedback for potential policy amendments.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):



City of *Cold Lake*

Submitted by:
Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer