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Presented by: Anna Royer, Recreation & Parks Department

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2/10/2020	1	Community Living Standing Committee	approved	Pass

TAMRMS#: B06

Policy C-CS-22 Outside Agency Grant Program Review

Presented by: Anna Royer, Recreation & Parks Department

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Community Living Standing Committee recommend to Council that the Outside Agency Grant Program Review dated February 10, 2020 be received as information.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

In March 19, 2018 Council approved a policy and program change related to Outside Agency funding. With the first full granting cycle of the revised program complete, this report brings forward a general review of the program.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Management of Community Granting:

Provision of funding to eligible St. Albert Not-for-profit organizations and residents in the areas of special events, sport and culture development, operational funding and capital renovations and development. Applications are accepted on an annual basis with submissions reviewed by the Community Services Advisory Committee in the fall of each year with recommendations forwarded to

Council for final funding approval. Total budget for this grant program is based on a funding formula of \$9 per capita.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL (OR COMMITTEE) DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On March 19, 2018 Council passed the following motions:

(POL-18-004)

That City Council Policy C-FS-12 Outside Agency Budget Guiding Principles be rescinded.

That City Council Policy C-CS-22 Outside Agency Grant Program be approved and be brought back to Council by the end of February 2020.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In March 2018, St. Albert City Council approved a new grant policy to govern funding allocations for not-for-profit groups requesting assistance with operating expenses. Council Policy C-CS-22 Outside Agency Operating Grant Program replaced Policy C-FS-12 Outside Agency Budget Guiding Principles and provided a publicly advertised funding opportunity which took into account City support already being provided through other opportunities to groups located in municipal buildings.

While the budget dollars available for Outside Agency funding did not change, there were changes made to the following areas of the program:

- Type of items eligible for funding.
- Applicant eligibility.
- Percentage of expense eligible for funding.
- Call for grant applicants is publicly advertised and made available to all eligible organizations.
- The program moved from an intake of business cases from a select group of organizations to an application process which is transparent, equitable, and recognizes the support that the organization has already received from the City through other opportunities and is built on documented expenses.

One of the key successes with the new program is inviting application openly to all eligible organizations. As a result of this change, Administration received eleven applications for this program in the 2020 intake, with one new applicant and two additional applicants who were new as of the 2019 intake. In addition, the accountability now required of the recipients has allowed Administration to ensure that grant funding from two separate City funding programs is not applied to the same expense.

The new application process assists with improved oversight surrounding the review of the applications both by Administration and the Community Services Advisory Committee as requests are received in the same format with organizations responding to the same questions and providing comparable data. In 2019, organizations received between 9 - 46% of their total annual operating budget through City grant/program funding. This includes consideration for FCSS program funding received through Community Development Services. The average allocation for City funding/support is 27% of the organization's total annual operating budget.

In order to gauge the effect of this new funding program on the 2019 recipients, Administration met separately with each of the ten organizations receiving 2019 funding to discuss opportunities and challenges experienced with their 2019 allocation of funding. Through dialogue with the organizations, Administration heard the following:

- At the time of the discussions, the organizations understood and were in agreement that an organization could only apply for a funding component through one municipal program. They supported the philosophy behind removing any opportunity to leverage dollars from different funding programs within the City for the same expense.
- The positive impacts experienced from the changes to the program included the ability to redirect funds from facility operating expenses to program and staffing costs; pride in living in a city that provides fair access to grant funding; and an overall positive impact to the organization. It was also expressed that they felt the City of St. Albert is very generous in its support to Outside Agencies in comparison to what other municipalities provide.
- The negative impacts or hardships experienced by a few of the groups focused on increased demand on the volunteer board and the staff to look for alternate fundraising opportunities. They have also had to increase membership fees, reduce costs in areas such as marketing, use revenue from rentals for operating costs, and one group expressed they had reduced staff hours.
- The organizations were all supportive with the division of two funding levels (Category 1 and Category 2) to ensure that funding was directed to those agencies serving St. Albert's most vulnerable residents.
- While the majority of the groups would enjoy receiving an increase in funding and would find a use for it, three of the groups felt strongly that there should be no increase to the funding available, and that it was more than a substantial budget for St. Albert. The area in which groups most often expressed a desire to receive increased funding was in the area of staffing.

As part of the review, Administration also held a discussion with the Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC). The CSAC are not recommending any further changes to the Policy or program including no increase to the base budget for funding allocations. While the Committee was in agreement that the changes have caused increased demands on the organizations to seek additional funding sources, the changes have also brought transparency, accountability, and a clearer understanding of the degree of support the organizations are receiving from the City. In addition, the CSAC discussed amending the definition of eligible organizations to include those organizations outside the boundary of the City of St. Albert who provides a service in St. Albert. The CSAC were not supportive of this idea.

With the first full grant cycle complete, and with funding for year two of this program also allocated, Administration has reviewed the program, and at this stage is not recommending any changes to the policy or program. While there have been some initial challenges with the transition to the new program, the organizations have been very resourceful and have continuously demonstrated their commitment to their members and clientele by making adjustments required to continue to provide their services within their means.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Included within the body of the report.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

None at this time.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

None at this time.

Organizational:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If the Committee does not wish to support the recommendations, the following alternative could be considered:

1. That the matter be directed back to Administration for further review taking into consideration the dialogue and feedback generated by the Committee and present a revision back to the Committee or Council at a future date.

Report Date: February 10, 2020

Author(s): Anna Royer

Committee/Department: Recreation & Parks Department

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble