



## Legislation Text

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**5.1**

### **Volunteer Opportunity Awareness Initiatives and/or Programs**

Presented by: Shannon Piller, Youth Development Coordinator, Community Services Linda Knoblauch, Manager, FCSS Strategies, Community Services

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)**

That Standing Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that Administration undertake no further work on motion CM-23-31.

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide Standing Committee of the Whole with an update on administration's discussions with the Youth Advisory Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee on volunteer opportunities, awareness initiatives and/or programs to encourage increased volunteer participation, to be implemented and championed through the committees, as well as the current state of volunteerism in St. Albert.

### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

In response to the original motion from Council on August 15, 2023, staff liaisons for both the Youth and Seniors Advisory Committees began conversations with the two committees starting in the fall of 2023. The recommendations in this report are the result of the discussions with both committees.

#### **Youth Advisory Committee**

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was advised of Council's motion at their September 2023 Committee Meeting. The topic was further discussed at their November 2023 Committee Meeting. YAC watched the August 15, 2023 Council meeting as a learning and skill building opportunity and a chance to understand the motion and to brainstorm initial ideas. YAC continued their discussion at their January 2024 Committee meeting, and came to consensus that they did not feel they have the capacity to develop and implement programs or initiatives for the following reasons:

- They feel they do not have the necessary skills to move this forward.
- It is outside the scope of their role as an advisory committee.

As a result of the above conclusions and during YAC's March 2024 Committee Meeting, YAC made the following motion:

*"That the Youth Advisory Committee recommends to Administration that the Volunteer Opportunity*

*Awareness Initiatives and/or Programs be spearheaded by Administration and that YAC advises and provides feedback on those initiatives and/or programs.”*

### **Seniors Advisory Committee**

The Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) discussed what motivates them to volunteer and current trends at their October 2023 Committee Meeting. They anticipated meeting with YAC later in 2024 to advise and provide feedback on their ideas. SAC was notified about the above motion approved by YAC. SAC brainstormed insights and ideas about volunteerism awareness opportunities at their March 2024 Committee Meeting to contribute to this report (Attachment - SAC Insights on Increasing Volunteerism Awareness). They also felt they did not have the ability to create and implement any program or initiative, although noted that the new Seniors/Elders Service Awards Program, which they are implementing, should encourage volunteerism in the community.

### **Community Social Needs Assessment**

A Community Social Needs Assessment was conducted in 2023. Recent national trends signal a crisis in volunteering and civic involvement, marked by declining volunteer rates and increasing demands on organizations that provide essential services.

In the Community Social Needs Assessment public survey, respondents were asked to identify the quality-of-life aspects that they felt were St. Albert's greatest strengths. Volunteerism was among the aspects that respondents chose as the community's greatest strengths.

Canada's social support system and the volunteer landscape are closely intertwined. The nonprofit and charitable sector is responsible for delivering a broad range of essential services and, with 58% of charitable organizations having no paid staff, volunteers play an integral role.

In St. Albert, volunteerism is supported through:

- Individual organizations and their related websites, social media, and relationships
- A webpage with links to volunteer opportunities
- The St. Albert & Area Volunteer Manager's Group. This group includes:
  - Africans and African Descendents Friendship Club of St. Albert
  - Arts and Heritage St. Albert
  - City of St. Albert - Youth in Action
  - City of St. Albert Arden Theatre
  - City of St. Albert Cultural Services
  - City of St. Albert FCSS
  - City of St. Albert Recreation
  - Jesus Rock of Ages
  - SAIF Society
  - St. Albert Food Bank & Community Village
  - St. Albert Further Ed
  - St. Albert Public Library
  - St. Albert Seniors Association
  - St. Albert Sturgeon Hospice Association
  - St. Albert Victim Services
  - Star Literacy
  - Sturgeon & Fort Saskatchewan Community Hospitals

- Youville Home
  - Sturgeon County FCSS
  - Military Family Resource Centre
  - Drive Happiness
  - St. Albert Family Resource Centre
  - Neutral Ground
  - BCG Bigs
- An annual Agency Information and Volunteer Fair
  - Annual community-wide Volunteer appreciation event.

Previously, volunteerism was supported through the Community Information and Volunteer Centre.

Additional information on the current state of volunteerism in St. Albert was compiled in a fact sheet used at a Community Social Needs Assessment engagement session in 2024 to help support community planning and prioritization for the upcoming Community Social Needs Roadmap. (Attachment - Fact Sheet - Volunteerism).

Outlined in the presentation, the Youth and Seniors Advisory Committee advised that there are some initiatives that could increase volunteer awareness in St. Albert.

Both committees indicated that they do not wish to take on the leadership or implementation roles for these efforts. Some of the proposed initiatives could be executed by the existing volunteer management group under the umbrella of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). It is anticipated that these initiatives could be supported within the current operating budgets. Should additional funding be necessary, administration will seek council approval at a future date.

## **STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT**

- Discussion with Youth Advisory Committee and Seniors Advisory Committee
- Community Social Needs Assessment (CSNA) included public and social serving organization surveys and engagement. A Community Social Needs Roadmap that considers the 2024 engagement session, prioritizes social needs for St. Albert, and identifies gaps, is under development.

## **IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### Financial:

The \$15,000 mentioned in the original motion is not needed at this time. The FCSS Branch will allocate resources for volunteerism opportunities prioritized by the Community Social Needs Assessment within the existing operating budgets. If additional funding is required, the FCSS Branch will return to the Council at a later date.

### Compliance & Legal:

None at this time.

### Program or Service:

Promotion and support of volunteerism are essential for requirements within the FCSS Accountability framework, as they enhance community connectedness, social inclusion, and resilience through primary and secondary prevention strategies. These efforts help build stronger, more cohesive communities capable of addressing and mitigating broader social issues.

CSNA will help prioritize this work in the future through the Volunteer Managers Working Table.

Organizational:

N/A

Risks

N/A

**ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

N/A

**ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

B.9 Social Development:

B.9.1 Community Capacity Building

B.9.1.a Education and Training

B.9.1.b Enhance Community Well-Being

B.9.1.c Information and Resources

B.9.1.d Resiliency and Preparedness

**ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION**

On August 15, 2023 Council passed the following motion:

CM-23-31

That Administration provides to Council recommended Volunteer Opportunity Awareness Initiatives and/or Programs to encourage increased volunteer participation. The recommended initiatives are to be spearheaded by the Youth Advisory Committee, with the Seniors Advisory Committee providing additional insight and feedback. The recommendations would be implemented and championed through the committees, with an annual operating budget up to \$15,000 per year.

**IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

If Standing Committee of the Whole does not wish to support the motion, the following alternative could be considered:

1. SCOW may provide direction to Administration to return at a later date with additional information.

Financial:

The \$15,000 mentioned in the original motion is not needed at this time.

Compliance & Legal:

N/A

Program or Service:

N/A

Organizational:

N/A

Risks

N/A

Report Date: June 11, 2024

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