



To: COUNCIL
Meeting Date: 3/28/2023
Subject: Community Grants
Submitted By: Sheryl Ayres, Chief Financial Officer
Prepared By: Kate Hyde, Senior Budget Analyst - Budgets
Report No.: 23-088-CRS
File No.: C11
Wards Affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 23-088-CRS Community Grants be received;

AND THAT Council approve applications less than \$25,000, as outlined in Appendix A, as recommended by the Community Grants Review Committee;

AND THAT Council approve applications received for requests greater than \$25,000 for 2023 as outlined in Appendix B, as proposed by the Community Grants Review Committee;

AND FURTHER THAT funding requests for years beyond 2023 not be approved at this time, as recommended by the Community Grants Review Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

To provide municipal grants to community organizations that offer programs and services that improve the health, lifestyle and community wellbeing of residents of the City of Cambridge.

Key Findings

- The Community Grants Review Committee (the Committee) consists of Mayor Jan Liggett, Councillor Nicholas Ermeta and Councillor Mike Devine.
- The Committee met in person on four separate occasions over the month of February 2023 to review the 2023 grant applications.
- The 2023 Community Grants program received a total of 49 applications totaling \$994,706. The approved Community Grants budget for 2023 is \$361,900.

- For applications of less than \$25,000, the Committee was tasked with assessing the applications and recommending funding for Council approval. For applications of greater than \$25,000, Council is responsible for allocating funding.
- The Committee reviewed a total of 37 applications of under \$25,000, requesting a total of \$322,774 and are recommending grant allocations to 22 groups totaling \$111,540. A total of 15 applications were not allotted funding due to a variety of reasons as highlighted in Appendix A.
- The Committee reviewed a total of 12 applications of greater than \$25,000, requesting a total of \$671,932. Of these applications, eight were for multi-year requests which totaled \$536,932 and four were for single year requests which totaled \$135,000. The Committee is recommending grant allocations to seven groups totaling \$250,360 for the 2023 budget year only. A total of five applications were not allotted funding due to a variety of reasons as highlighted in Appendix B.
- The Committee recognized the fact that eight groups applied for multi-year funding and does not recommend approval of multi-year funding requests at this time. The Committee noted that applicants can reapply in years 2024 and 2025 and the City can assess those grant requests against City of Cambridge's priorities at that time. A summary of the organizations that applied, including the amount of their request and reason for the application, can be found in Appendix B.

Financial Implications

The 2023 Community Grants program received 49 applications in the total amount of \$994,706. The City of Cambridge has allotted \$361,900 in the 2023 Operating Budget to support and enable the work of local non-profit agencies, groups and organizations dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for residents.

The program has been heavily applied to in 2023 and therefore funding decisions were challenging to make. Many groups are recommended to receive less funding than what they applied for in order to ensure that some funding is provided to as many groups as possible. As a result, the Committee felt it was best to apply all funding available and has opted not to hold back any funds this year.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

- Strategic Action; or
- Core Service

Objective(s): WELLBEING - Connect people to services that support individual and community wellbeing

Strategic Action: Not Applicable

Program: Grants

Core Service: Grants Provided

BACKGROUND:

The Community Grants policy was approved by Council in the fall of 2021 for the launch of the 2022 program. The program was implemented to provide support to not-for-profit organizations to deliver programs or services that benefit the quality of life of Cambridge residents. The program provides funding to organizations based on the following categories:

- Social Services
- Recreation and Sport
- Arts, Culture and Events
- Civic & Leisure Interests
- Not-for-profit organizations that further the interests and prosperity of the City of Cambridge

Applicants are responsible for reviewing the program eligibility criteria and seeking out grant application information and submission deadlines. Utilizing the online application site, each group is required to apply annually for funding and complete an outcome reporting form by the end of the year to report on how annual funding was spent and what impact the funding achieved in the community. This process provides greater transparency on grant funding provided by the City to community organizations.

Applications are reviewed by an internal staff team from Financial Services and Recreation and Culture before being evaluated by the Committee. Each application is assessed based on compliance with the Community Grants policy and criteria as outlined in the policy.

The 2023 Community Grants application process opened on September 30, 2022 and all applications were due on November 30, 2022. A summary of the 2023 grant applicants and their requests are attached in Appendix A and B.

ANALYSIS:

The Committee met in person on four occasions to review the 2023 grant applications. Select applicants were invited to meet with the Committee at its third meeting to give a

brief overview of their application and answer questions of Committee members. These applicants included the following:

- Cambridge Cultural Association,
- Waterloo Regional Block Parent Program,
- Cambridge Tour de Grand Inc.,
- Child Witness Centre of Waterloo Region, and
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 126 Preston.

The Community Grants program is structured with two application streams – one for requests less than \$25,000 with an abbreviated application form and one for requests greater than \$25,000 and/or multi-year funding requests. A total of 49 applications were received for the 2023 Program. These applications were comprised of 37 applications of less than \$25,000 and 12 applications of greater than \$25,000 which included eight multi-year requests. The total funding requested for 2023 was \$994,706 which includes all Year 1 (2023) requests. The total of Year 2 (2024) and Year 3 (2025) of multi-year requests is \$626,086 and \$705,649 respectively. Upon review of the multi-year applications the Committee recommends that multi-year requests not be approved at this time. The Committee noted that applicants can reapply in years 2024 and 2025 and the City can assess those grant requests against City of Cambridge's priorities at that time. Therefore, multi-year requests were considered but not recommended at this time and not guaranteed in future years. A summary of the 2023 grant applicants and their requests are attached in Appendix A and B.

For applications received of less than \$25,000 the Committee is recommending grant allocations to 22 groups in the total amount of \$111,540. A summary of the 2023 grant applicants of less than \$25,000 and their requests are attached in Appendix A. The Committee is also proposing funding for Council's consideration for requests greater than \$25,000 which allots \$250,360 to seven groups. A summary of each groups request can be found in Appendix B.

An Internal Review Team consisting of five internal staff from Finance and Recreation & Culture completed a comprehensive review of each application in five separate meetings over the month of January 2023. The Internal Review Team completed a Community Grants Application Evaluation Scoring Matrix for each eligible application.

The Evaluation Scoring Matrix is intended to be used as an objective tool to assess each grant application against the criteria outlined in the Community Grants Policy. The scores are not considered the sole determining factor regarding how grant funding is allocated but are intended to be used as a tool to help further inform the Grants Review Committee during discussions.

The Evaluation Scoring Matrix ensured the application met the eligibility criteria set out in the Community Grants Policy and encompassed a number of evaluation criteria including:

- Alignment with the City of Cambridge Strategic Plan
- Community Impact
- Merits of the funding request
- Organizational profile
- Organizations finances
- Benefit to the community

The Internal Review Team provided a recommended funding amount in the Evaluation Scoring Matrix for the Committee to consider under its review of the applications.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

Policy #A09 FIN 004 – Community Grants Program

The purpose under the Community Grants Program (A09 FIN 004) include:

- To improve the wellbeing of Cambridge residents through the direction of City grant funding to eligible organizations that can demonstrate their positive contribution to the achievement of the community wellbeing goals.
- To provide municipal funds or other forms of financial assistance, in limited amounts, to community groups and/or organizations that align with the City's strategic direction.
- To consider each grant in its own merit and to deal with it in a transparent, equitable and objective manner.
- To ensure that a proper system of accountability is developed and maintained by the community groups and /or organizations receiving funding from the City.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Committee is recommending funding be provided to 22 groups who applied for funding of less than \$25,000. The total of this funding is \$111,540.

The Committee has also proposed funding of \$250,360 be provided to seven groups that applied for funding of greater than \$25,000. No multi-year funding requests were recommended by the Committee.

The above recommendations allocate 100% of the 2023 Community Grants Program Operating Budget of \$361,900.

PUBLIC VALUE:

By performing an in-depth review of applications to ensure their compliance with our policy as well as reviewing reports on how funding was spent in previous years, we are supporting sustainability through the responsible management of financial resources, ensuring transparency for the public and accountability to our applicants.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Advisory Committees Consulted:

- Not Applicable

PUBLIC INPUT:

The 2023 Community Grants application process was open to the public on September 30, 2022 and all applications were due on November 30, 2022. The applicants enter their application requests through the online application site where each group is required to apply each year for funding. This process provides greater transparency on grant funding provided by the City to community organizations.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Internal:

An Internal Review Team consisting of five internal staff from Finance and Recreation & Culture completed a comprehensive review of each application. The Recreation & Culture staff who were part of the Internal Review Team provided insights such as what in-kind services are currently being provided to the groups and if there would be any duplication of City services regarding the programs and services proposed in the grant applications.

Furthermore, the Committee and staff consulted with the Director of Operations to clarify tree planting programs completed at the City as well as snow plowing work that is completed at the Galt Horticultural Society location.

External:

At the request of the Grant Review Committee, a total of five groups were invited to meet in person at City Hall during the third Grants Review Committee Meeting. The groups were asked to complete a 5-minute presentation summarizing their grant application and 10-15 minutes were allotted for the Committee to ask questions of the group to gain clarification regarding their application. These interviews were conducted with Cambridge Cultural Association, Waterloo Regional Block Parent Program, Cambridge Tour de Grand Inc., Child Witness Centre of Waterloo Region, and Royal Canadian Legion Branch 126 Preston on February 14th, 2023.

Additional email and telephone conversations were conducted with the Fashion History Museum and REEP Green Solutions to gain clarification regarding their grant application.

Letters have been sent to each of the groups that applied for funding to notify them of the Committee's decision in regards to their application.

CONCLUSION:

Through a comprehensive review of all the applications, the Committee was able to meet the objective of the Community Grants Policy within the funding allocated in the 2023 budget.

A summary of the recommendations for the 2023 grant applicants of less than \$25,000 and their requests are attached in Appendix A. Also, a summary of recommendations for the 2023 grant applications of greater than \$25,000 and their requests are attached as Appendix B.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **Yes**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 23-088-CRS Appendix A – Applications of less than \$25,000
2. 23-088-CRS Appendix B – Applications of greater than \$25,000