



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: Director of Finance
Subject: Grant in Aid Program 2024

File No.:
Date: September 25, 2024

PURPOSE:

To seek Council direction for the future of the Grant-in-Aid program that is currently administered by the Comox Valley Community Foundation for a year trial.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 28, 2023 Council meeting, Council passed the following resolutions:

THAT Council enter into an agreement with the Comox Valley Community Foundation for the administration and distribution of the City's annual grant-in-aid program; and,

THAT Council adopt Grant-in-Aid and Other Forms of Financial Support Policy 1850.00.04.

THAT Council amend the grant-in-aid agreement with the Comox Valley Community Foundation to change the term to one year; and,

THAT Council direct staff to return to Council before the one-year term expires for reconsideration of the amount of grant-in-aid funding, and further review of Grant-in-Aid and Other Forms of Financial Support Policy 1850.00.04.

An agreement was completed between the City and the Comox Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) to administer the grant-in-aid (GIA) program for 2023/2024. The CVCF distributed the City's \$50,000 with a per organization maximum of \$5,000 (self directed), the summary below shows the GIA recipients of City funds.

City of Courtenay Grant-in-Aid 2023/24 Recipients

This year, the Comox Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) distributed \$536,116 to 51 organizations through its granting programs. The following list summarizes the ten community service organizations that received a combination of CVCF and Grant-in-Aid Funding. The project description provides a snapshot of the project's purpose. More detail can be provided upon request.

Organization	Project Description	CVCF Grant Amount	City of Courtenay Funds Added	Total Funding
Comox Valley Arts	Supporting access to arts for all ages via operating support	\$3,404	\$5,000	\$8,404
Glacier View Lodge Society	Supporting food security for seniors and low-income caregivers	\$2,325	\$5,000	\$7,325
Comox Valley Hospice Society	Supporting programming for wellness in the end-of-life journey	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Comox Valley Transition Society	Supporting renewal of Amethyst House recovery programs	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Courtenay Elementary Community School Society	Supporting children/youth and food security via renovations that increase lunch program capacity	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Eureka Support Society	Supporting mental health and food security via costs for the society kitchen program	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
LUSH Valley Food Action Society	Supporting operating needs and delivery of food security programs	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry Society	Supporting wages for Cultural Family Networker and programs	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Comox Bay Care Society	Supporting Car-A-Van mobile outreach, health, and social development services to unhoused and vulnerable populations	\$13,000	\$5,000	\$18,000
Project Watershed Society	Supporting water monitoring initiative of Comox Valley's surface and ground water health	\$22,048	\$5,000	\$27,048
Total		\$120,777	\$50,000	\$170,777

DISCUSSION:

Staff is seeking direction on continuing with the arrangement between the City and CVCF for the administration of the GIA program. There are two documents that guide the distribution of GIA funds, Policy 1850.00.04 (high level) and the agreement between the City and CVCF (granular). Policy discussion is found below in the Policy Analysis section of the report.

Memorandum of Agreement (attachment 1)

The agreement with CVCF is the mechanism for Council to provide specific direction on how funds are distributed. The existing agreement has worked well however CVCF staff have made recommendations to change section 8 Granting Criteria to better align with their granting process.

Section 8 – Criteria for Granting

Eligibility for grants will be in accordance with CVCF's Policy 3.1: Granting

In addition, the following criteria required by the City will determine eligibility for Grant-in-Aid funds from the City:

- 1. Organizations must be based in The City of Courtenay.*
- 2. Funding is not available for individuals or for-profit entities.*
- 3. The project/activity must benefit the entire community (all ages and groups).*

- ~~4. The request is the only financial support from the City.~~ 4. Organization with active service agreements with the City will not be eligible for funding.
- ~~5. Other sources of funding have been applied for.~~
- ~~6. The organization is financially sustainable.~~
7. Each Grant-in-Aid from The City of Courtenay funds will not exceed \$10,000.

Notes on the above

4. The request is the only financial support from the City – This criterion has been removed and replaced with *Organization with active service agreements with the City will not be eligible for funding*. The rationale for this is to better identify and limit the restrictiveness of the criteria. Organizations that have service agreements benefit from substantial City support and should not be eligible to receive further support in an effort to increase the number of organizations supported by the City and through GIA. CVCF will be provided a listing of active service agreements.
5. Other sources of funding have been applied for – This criterion has been removed as it is built into the CVCF decision making process. The CVCF funds projects to 100% of the request and it usually requires funding from several sources. Furthermore, this criterion does not impact the validity of a project.
6. The organization is financially sustainable – This criterion has been removed as it is built into the CVCF decision making process.

CVCF Granting Methodology

Eligibility for grants is guided by Canada Revenue Agency. In addition, the Foundation establishes two-year granting priorities to support a granting decisions framework. These priority areas are informed via community listening initiatives that include but are not limited to community research, focus groups, and surveys. In 2023/24, four priorities guided the distribution of funding for the Community Enrichment Grants program:

- 1) mental health & connection,
- 2) food systems & security,
- 3) arts, culture & heritage,
- 4) indigenous led and benefitting initiatives.

Three additional priorities were served separately through other granting streams:

- 1) environment, climate & conservation,
- 2) adults with diverse abilities, and
- 3) housing security/homelessness supports.

The CVCF uses a community-based granting model support Granting program decisions. For example, the Grants Review Task Force, comprised of up to eight community members, serves as an advisory team to review, discuss, and consensus rank applications. Evaluation is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to the impact as it relates to the granting priorities, financial sustainability of the organization, accountability measures, and more.

Summary

The City could add layers of additional criteria to restrict the flow of funds however the CVCF granting process and methodology creates alignment with City goals of community-based supports and to ensure funds are provided to projects and organizations that meet the communities needs.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Policy 1850.00.04 has been updated to better reflect the current GIA support that the CVCF provides. The policy in the past provided guidance when the City was distributing funds however the practice has

changed and the policy has been updated to better reflect the current arrangement. The policy still contains guidance that funding is for not-for-profit or charitable organizations only. Furthermore, organizations that have active service agreements with the City are not eligible to receive further funding through the GIA program.

The policy not only provides guidance for funding through CVCF it also provides guidance for all other grant-like funding provided by the City, if it occurs. The policy has remained at a high level as the volume of funding being distributed directly from the City to recipients is low as the majority is flowing through CVCF.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The 2024-2028 Five-year Financial Plan includes \$50,000 annually for the GIA program. Funding for the program is set to come from Gaming Funds. The CVCF charges a 5% administration fee on contributions for disbursement under \$100,000, the fee reduces to 4% for disbursements over \$100,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Should Council approve the proposed agreement, the administration of the GIA program will stay with CVCF. City staff involvement will include monitoring and administering the agreement as well as CVCF's reporting back on outcomes. Implementing this agreement is consistent with Council direction and free up Financial Services staff to deliver core services as well as initiatives outlined in the City's strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

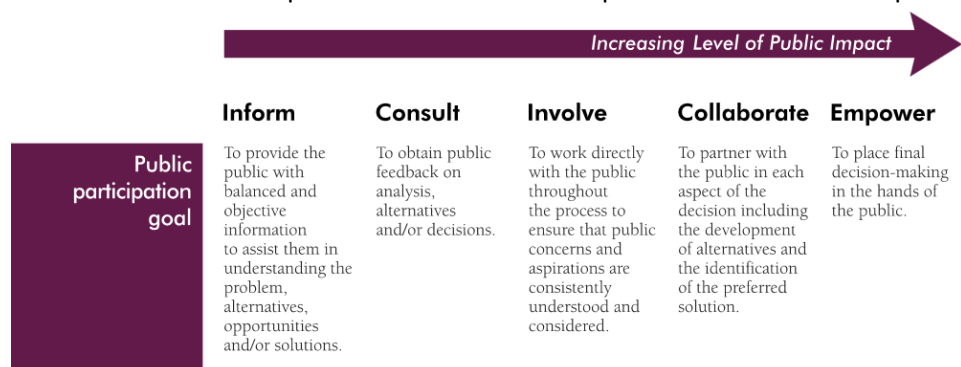
The Grant-in-Aid program can support all four cardinal directions of the strategic plan:

- Climate action
- Reconciliation
- Equity
- Community well-being

Support for all four cardinal directions comes from the broad reach and accessibility of grant funds to various organizations that individually might not deliver all 4 cardinal direction but as a whole group deliver all four cardinal directions.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council enter into an 3 year agreement with the Comox Valley Community Foundation for the administration and distribution of the City's annual \$50,000 grant-in-aid program.
and
THAT Council adopt Grant-in-Aid and other forms of Financial Support Policy 1850.00.04
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Memorandum of Agreement 2024-2026 - Grant in Aid
2. Policy - 1850.00.04 Grant in Aid
3. City of Courtenay Grant in Aid Report 2024
4. Comox Valley Community Foundation Grant Report 2024
5. CVCF Presentation Sept 25, 2024

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