



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF PARKS, FACILITIES, RECREATION & CULTURE

MISSION STATEMENT: *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

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Author's Phone: 519 736-5712 ext. 2128	Date to Council: February 13, 2023
Author's E-mail: hbaillargeon@amherstburg.ca	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant Opportunities

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The Chief Administrative Officer or designate **BE AUTHORIZED** to submit a project application for the Gordon House Improvements to the Rural Economic Development (RED) Strategic Economic Infrastructure Stream (SEIS) with the following recommendations required for the submission;
 - a. Council **APPROVES** the following funding for the project:
 - i. \$40,000 recommended in 2023 in the capital budget for the Gordon House Improvements project (FAC-005-23);
 - ii. \$58,000 from the Tax Stabilization reserve and;
 - b. Council **DIRECTS** Administration to replenish the \$58,000 from the Tax Stabilization reserve in 2024 by a transfer from the Capital New reserve and;
 - c. If the grant for the Gordon House is not awarded funding:
 - i. Council **DIRECTS** that the \$40,000 in 2023 proceed to complete the painting and siding and;
 - ii. Council **RESCINDS** the allocation of \$58,000 from the Tax Stabilization reserve and;
2. Chief Administrative Officer or designate **BE AUTHORIZED** to submit a project application for the development of a Business Retention and Expansion program to the Rural Economic Development (RED) Economic Diversification and Competitiveness Stream (EDCS), subject to the results of the 2023 budget deliberations approving the Economic Development and Communications position required to execute the project, and with following funding required for the submission;

- a. Council **APPROVES** the following funding for the project:
 - i. Up to a maximum of \$92,000 from the Tax Stabilization reserve and;
 - b. Council **DELEGATES** authority to the Chief Administrative Officer or designate to obtain letters of support and or enter into agreements for in kind or financial contributions from other organizations for this project submission and;
 - c. If the grant for the Business Retention and Expansion project is not awarded funding Council **RESCINDS** the allocation of \$92,000 from the Tax Stabilization reserve and;
3. That the Chief Administrative Officer and/or the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer **BE AUTHORIZED** to sign and execute any agreements, declarations or approvals required to submit the grant applications noted in the report of February 2, 2023.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

In the past, the Town has applied for a number of grants to assist in funding festivals, events and capital projects. Some of the grants from 2022 include:

- Canadian Healthy Communities
- South West Ontario Tourism (SWOTC) Relief Fund
- Reconnect Relief Fund
- Fed Dev Tourism Relief Fund
- Canadian Heritage
- Enbridge Fueling Futures
- Ministry of Canadian Heritage
- CWATS

The timing and availability of grants is not static or predictable and some have very tight timelines for submission. In some cases, such as this, the lead time to apply for a grant is extremely short reducing the Town's ability to investigate the grant, obtain the required information and documentation and develop the application with Council approval. In this case the programs which would be applied for require resources and capital investments recommended, but not yet deliberated or approved by Council.

The grant identified in this report was opened January 23rd with a February 23rd deadline for submission. Despite the unfortunate timing with budget deliberations, Administration recognizes the value in pursuing the grants. These grants do require funding commitments. In the case of the EDCS project, approval of the Economic Development and Communications position is required to support the application and execute the project. This report recommends the funding strategy for both projects, however does not recommend the position be approved at this time, recognizing it should be debated by Council in concert with the other position requests during budget deliberations. Administration will proceed to complete the application for the Business Retention and Expansion project under the assumption of the position being approved given the deadline is February 23, 2023. Should Council not approve the position that grant will not be submitted as the business case would not be viable. If the position is approved Administration will be in a position to submit the grant on time.

3. DISCUSSION:

Every grant has its own unique set of guidelines and eligibility requirements in order to apply. Administration undertakes an initial review of the grant guidelines to determine if the Town is eligible to apply and what projects may meet the requirements of the grant. The criteria on how a project is reviewed and scored is also an important factor when putting together and grant submission and selecting a project. There are several evaluation factors for this grant including 'financial commitment'. This factor is looking for the submission to outline the financial commitment made by the applicant for the project. The funding recommendations are put forward in order to achieve a response to this matter.

The Rural Economic Development Program (RED) has two funding streams:

A. Rural Economic Development – Strategic Economic Infrastructure Stream

The grant provides for up to 30% funding for eligible project costs, up to a maximum of \$250,000. The recommended 2023 capital budget includes the Gordon House Improvements Project (FAC-005-23). This project has identified funding in 2023, 2024 and 2025 at a total cost of \$140,000, to complete the painting and siding, install a storage shed and replace windows. If this project were to be awarded 30% in grant funding it would be approximately \$42,000, reducing the Town's cost to complete this project to \$98,000.

The recommended funding strategy for the Town's \$98,000 is approval of the \$40,000 recommended for this project in the 2023 5-year capital budget. The remaining \$58,000 is recommended to be borrowed from the Tax Stabilization reserve and replenished in 2024 by a transfer from the Capital New reserve.

B. Rural Economic Development - Economic Diversification and Competitiveness Stream

This stream provides for up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$150,000. The program funding would quickly advance economic development programs, data and material for the Town. The projects would directly align with the objectives for the proposed Economic Development & Communications Officer recommended in the 2023 operational budget. The position is required for the grant submission to be made as without it there is no resourcing to take on the development of the programs, with or without grant funding.

There is also no matching funding identified in the operational or capital budget for this work. It is therefore recommended that the Town's matching funding, to a maximum of \$92,000 be funded from the Tax Stabilization reserve.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

There is a risk that other current priorities will be delayed in order to put both grant submissions together on time, despite the risk that one may not proceed. Given the potential funding opportunity to quickly develop and implement new economic development programs, data and visioning Administration has deemed this a risk which

needs to be accepted in order to be in a position to submit if the needed approvals are given.

There is a risk that the grants will not be awarded funding, resulting in these programs being scaled back to what can be funded based on Town budget approvals.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Grant funds can significantly contribute to municipal projects, leveraging provincial and federal funding for capital projects to lessen the burden on tax payers. The grant streams for RED provide the opportunity to pull forward 3 years worth of work on the Gordon House and reduce the Town's share in those costs by \$42,000. The other grant stream would expedite the development of various business retention and expansion programs, however it tied to a need for the position recommended in the operating budget, as well as \$92,000 from the tax stabilization reserve to for matching funding.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Chief Financial Officer CFO

7. CONCLUSION:

Administration recommends Council provide approval to apply for grants where the town is eligible.



Melissa Osborne
Deputy CAO / Director of Development Services



Heidi Baillargeon
Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation and Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Grant Opportunities.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Feb 8, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature found

Melissa Osborne

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tracy Prince".

Tracy Prince

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Critchley".

Valerie Critchley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Fox".

Kevin Fox