



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF THE CAO

Mission Statement: As stewards of the Town of Amherstburg, we strive to improve the quality of life of all residents through the delivery of effective, efficient, and affordable services.

Author's Name: Kevin Fox	Report Date: February 21, 2025
Author's Phone: 519 736 0012 ext. 2272	Date to Council: March 24, 2025
Author's E-mail: kfox@amherstburg.ca	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Community Grant Process

1. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that:

1. The request from 2nd Amherstburg Scouting **BE RECEIVED** and further direction **BE PROVIDED**.

2. BACKGROUND:

On October 5th, 2007 the Community Grant Policy was adopted by the Town of Amherstburg. Community Grants had been provided prior to 2007, but it is unclear what formal structure existed at that time.

The latest revisions to the Community Grant Program and Policy were approved on January 1, 2024, including elements seeking to align the funding to the Town's community based strategic plan.

On December 9th, 2024 during the 2025 budget deliberations regarding the Community Grant Program, the following Council motion was adopted:

Resolution 20241209-005

Moved By Councillor Crain

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Gibb

That Council **TO REQUEST** a report to allow for review of the community grant process and determine a more streamlined approach prior to the 2026 deliberations.

During budget deliberations, one Community Grant request, from 2nd Amherstburg Scouting for \$2,000.00, was not brought forward for consideration, in error. This error resulted from the various methods with which community grants are currently provided to the Town and administrative error. In 2024, the 2025 grant requests featured a number of late requests and submissions varied from those submitted in-person, through the mail, and to various email addresses. This can cause confusion and issues with tracking and following up.

This request has now been included for consideration to allow Council to direct how they wish to address that Community Grant application.

3. DISCUSSION:

2nd Amherstburg Scouting Community Grant Request

The 2nd Amherstburg Scouting Community Grant request complies with the Town's Community Grant Policy and was submitted in accordance with the timelines for consideration.

The grant request is as follows:

"2nd Amherstburg Scouting is our local scouting group, which is inclusive of all youth regardless of gender, religion, or race. We are growing in size, but do not have a dedicated meeting place since the closing of Wesley United Church; in recent years we have been at Amherstburg Public School, Masonic Lodge, and most recently Anderdon Public School. We are once again displaced due to scheduling conflicts and would like to use the Bryerswood Camp; unfortunately, this is out of our price range, but the location provides an amazing opportunity for our youth to balance outdoor activities and indoor usage in extreme weather conditions. The Town's community grant would help cover the rental costs for this year's Amherstburg youth scouting season."

Should Council wish to approve this funding, the following motion would be in order:

That:

1. The Community Grant Request from 2nd Amherstburg Scouting **BE APPROVED**; and,
2. Administration **BE DIRECTED** to fund an unbudgeted expenditure to the Non-Departmental General Listing, Community Grants (0357), in the amount of \$2,000.

Community Grant Programs

Whether or not a community provides a Community Grant program is entirely at the discretion of a Council. In recent years, many communities have found it increasingly difficult to fund programs of this sort with increased downloaded responsibilities, the known inadequacy of the municipal funding model and the demands of aging infrastructure.

Balancing these realities are the very real impact that a Community Grant Program can have to sustain the vibrancy of a community and its civic, artistic and cultural programs, events and associations. Were the Town of Amherstburg to not offer the Community Grant Program, it could be expected to have a real and significant impact on a number of local causes.

Conceptual Design and Philosophy behind Community Grant Programs

The current Community Grant Policy and Program are designed around a broad sense of community benefit. This program is not designed in the manner akin to traditional grant applications, in that it lacks much of the exclusionary elements that would frame what the grant intends to cover and what it does not.

The Community Grant Program has been a substantial support for various community groups since 2007, and represents significant investments in many arts, culture and heritage endeavours in the community, which is reflective of the character of the community. In recent years, the requests have grown in size and are much more substantial than in years prior. In order to remain within the budgetary constraints, some requests have not been funded at all, while others have seen reductions from requests to stay within the targeted funding envelope.

While this practice of providing funding to community groups was more common in other communities in 2007, it is less common today, as budgetary constraints on many communities have led to these programs being scaled back or removed. Where such programs do not exist, community groups that have relied on that support may not have sufficient funding to maintain the service levels they currently provide.

Should Council wish to continue the program but also seek to streamline the process to better align with the budget set for the project, Administration has included changes it will be undertaking to internal processes and includes some elements that Council could give further consideration.

Community Grant Application Process

One of the largest issues with regards to any grant process, are the administrative tasks associated with reviewing and managing these elements. Since 2007, the program has taken in requests received from a variety of methods, and can sometimes vary wildly depending on the applicant and whether they utilized the proper application forms and processes. This also introduces the opportunity for administrative error.

Administration will build a web form application, with clear requirements for submission and routing through appropriate staff for approvals and Council consideration. This should reduce the administrative burden associated and make plain the requirements in the grant process, in line with the other streamlined elements.

Communication with Community Groups

As with any change to policy or practice, Administration is aware that changes to the Program may not be apparent to applicants, as they may not have followed Council matters closely in this regard. To prevent any miscommunication, Administration will

reach out to those who applied in the previous cycle and advise them of the application process changes to prevent any issues from arising.

Promotion of Community Grants

Granting agencies will often promote the good works that their funding has enabled through a public showcase of the grants and some communications on this front. In recent years, the Town has not promoting much of what it has funded, and has not sought recognition from grantees in their own promotions.

The 2025 Community Grants were provided by Council to the recipients in a public way and Administration can include in their correspondence the requirements to acknowledge the funding in promotional materials that the recipients create as part of the programming being funded.

Additional Considerations - #1 - Council's Community Grant Objectives

Many grants target their funding to specific objectives and set out elements which are excluded from consideration. As the Community Grant Program is Council's program, they can certainly identify any strategic alignment or excluded content that they wish to see noted in the policy, beyond that which is already noted.

Administration would recommend consideration of the addition exclusionary statements for the Community Grant Policy, to better denote what is not to be funded through this process:

1. Funding not to be provided for: Capital funding for building projects, renovations, or construction related activities;

For example, in excluding capital investments for construction activities, the Town would not entertain those types of projects through this process and can deal with any such opportunities that may arise through other funding considerations like its Charitable Donation Policy process.

2. Funding not to be provided for; sport related activities;

With regards to funding for sport-related activities, the Town already subsidizes paces it provides for these activities to take place, and/or the costs associated with running these programs, and includes the processes under the Town's Access to Affordable Recreation Policy, the Pathway 2 Potential Program funding and promotes other granting agencies, like Jump Start. In addition, should this funding appear to include these elements, it is likely that additional user groups will come forward to seek those supports, necessitating either greater investment or higher rejection rates.

3. Funding not to be provided for; Fee Waivers, tax relief or expenses related to insurance;

There are already processes in place for fee waiver requests to be considered, based upon the specific process the request is in relation to. Processes regarding taxation should not be addressed via the Community Grants process, given this highly regulated space and requirements around such considerations. Finally, expenses related to insurance are often excluded from grant considerations because it ensures the adequacy of the space between respective parties from an insured standpoint, and it does not appear to have any genuine public interest in providing funding for another parties liability.

4. Funding not to be provided for; advertising and promotional materials.

Funding these elements does not appear to be the original objective or intention associated with the Community Grant Program, and prevents situations wherein the content of that messaging needs to be considered from the Town's interests or perspectives. Further, the Town already has avenues for promotion of local interests and events through its digital gateway signage and its various promotional channels that regularly occur.

The above additional policy exclusions provide greater clarity to those seeking grant funding to better align that funding with the Town's Community Based Strategic Plan, to not duplicate existing supports or programs, and to limit the scope and volume of requests received.

In re-focusing requests in this way, it would ensure that when funding is provided it is streamlined to reflect Council's Strategic Objectives and the focus on community based funding supports for arts, culture and heritage as well as community services, like food programs or social programming.

Should Council wish to revise the policy to include these exclusionary elements, or any other, in addition to those already noted in the attached policy, direction to Administration should be provided to amend the Community Grants Policy to include section #1.

Additional Considerations - #2 - Grant Funding Envelope and Maximum Individual Funding Contribution

Grants offered at Provincial or Federal levels include a funding framework to ensure that those requesting grants understand the intended funding levels available in applying. In recent years, the Town has seen some requests in excess of the entire funding envelope from a single grant request. This likely derives from there being no defined maximum individual funding contribution.

In the jurisdictional scan completed for this realm, a common theme is to ensure that there is broad, but shallow supports to reach the maximum target audience. Council could given due consideration to what the total funding envelope consists of, what a maximum total contribution could be, and thereby have an appreciation for how many areas may be able to be supported by any particular funding season.

In giving consideration to this, Council should be mindful that while the Town's policy clearly notes that, "...Grants are intended to be supplementary to main sources of funding

for organizations,” however, it cannot be discounted that an impact is likely to be felt by organizations if the funding provided is quickly and significantly altered.

The Community Grant Program and Policy was drafted with a number of warnings that there is no guarantee of funding supports, but there is also no doubt that this funding has enabled a number of Community Groups to offer programming and opportunities to the residents which might not otherwise exist and for which, changes to this area could have real world consequences.

Other Considerations - #3 – Specific Program Goals and Objectives

As this is Council’s Community Grant Program, the goals and objectives for the program should be a reflection of the strategic aims of the Council. A review of our Strategic Plan notes some elements that are immediately apparent and seem to align, such as:

Pillar 1 – Deliver Trusted and Accountable Government

- Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation.

Pillar 2 – Invest in Community Amenities and Infrastructure

- Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change.
- Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages.

Pillar 3 – Encourage Local Economic Prosperity

- Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation.
- Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal, and local governments, agencies, and organizations.

Pillar 4 – Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

- Protect the Town’s historic sites and heritage.
- Preserve the Town’s greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.

These strategic priorities are Council’s priority provided through the lens of what the Town seeks to achieve, so may not be a perfect representation of what Council seeks to achieve through its Community Grants. For example, many of the above items, being strategic objectives, are achieved through a combination of Council’s other targeted objectives, such as through an Economic Development CIP, through a Heritage Tax Rebate Program, through Access to Affordable Recreation Services or the P2P Program, etc.

For this reason, it may be best that Council separately articulates some elements that represent the goals and objectives it has in providing a Community Grant Program. A review of previous funding includes elements that are not noted in the strategic plan, but for which the current and previous Council’s have routinely funded, such as Amherstburg Community Services, the Amherstburg Food and Fellowship Mission or the Freedom Museum. In articulating the specific aims areas which have been funded in the past tend to be those with a civic, social, cultural, and/or heritage focus.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

There is a risk that if Council decided to cease offering the Community Grant Program that this could have a negative impact on organizations and associations in the community who have programming or services which are funded through this program.

The current Community Grant Program does not provide clear guidance in terms of excluded content and alignment with strategic priorities of the Town of Amherstburg. It is further lacking a defined maximum individual contribution limit, and as such, sets forth the conditions that could lead to misunderstandings of what the program does or does not fund, and at what rate.

The considerations in this report could mitigate the risks inherent in the existing program by setting out a streamlined application process to be followed, clear parameters for the types of activities that are not funded and that are encouraged to be funded, and gives consideration to the funding envelope and maximum individual contributions.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The Town's Community Grant Program receives requests in excess of available funding each and every year. In recent years, the program has also seen an increase in the amount that has been requested by individual requester's in relation to changing market conditions, which do not reflect the intention of the grant program to be a supportive assistance for increased programming needs, and not to represent a foundational element of any organizations funding envelope.

Year	Total Amount Requested	Total Amount Funded
2025	\$100,930.60	\$60,000.00
2024	\$137,703.00	\$60,000.00
2023	\$54,250.00	\$54,250.00
2022	\$40,121.00	\$44,750.00
2021	\$34,250.00	\$32,569.76
2020	\$41,775.00	\$30,400.00
2019	\$37,136.00	\$36,276.71
2018	\$87,405.00	\$41,769.90
2017	\$36,750.00	\$34,250.00
2016	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$31,500.00
2015	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$27,250.00
2014	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$30,000.00
2013	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$29,150.00
2012	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$34,900.00
2011	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$25,145.00
2010	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$22,250.00
2009	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$24,050.00
2008	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$22,076.86
2007	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$20,050.00
2006	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$60,825.00

2005	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$23,450.00
2004	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$25,750.00
2003	<i>Information not readily available</i>	\$22,700.00

In 2025, the following grant requests and funding, was provided:

Applicants	Grant Requests	Funding Received
Amherstburg Community Services	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Amherstburg Food and Fellowship Mission	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Amherstburg Freedom Museum	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00
Amherstburg Historic Sites Association (Park House)	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00
Amherstburg Columbus Community Hall	\$10,477.60	\$0.00
Christ Anglican Church Cemetery	\$1,000.00	\$547.00
Windsor-Essex Bike Community	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Affordable Housing Grant*	\$8,453.00	\$8,453.00
Rose City Gymnastics	\$18,000.00	\$0.00
2nd Amherstburg Scouts	\$2,000.00	TBD

The Affordable Housing Grant is a contractual obligation of the Town for a period of 20 years, beginning in 2021. Given this is not part of the Community Grants Program, Council can provide direction to fund this element from another area if it so wishes, as the Program requirements and application elements do not apply to this funding.

It is a Council decision whether to fund this program and at what level to fund the program, inclusive of whether there are individual contribution maximums. To date, the highest single amount that has been provided appears to be \$20,000.00. The total highest contributions given out in a year appears to be \$60,825.00. The current base budget amount is \$60,000.00.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPACTS:

N/A

7. CONSULTATIONS:

Tracy Prince, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer/Director of Corporate Services
Yufang Du, Manager of Financial Services / Deputy Treasurer

2nd Amherstburg Scouting Troop

8. CORPORATE STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Vision: Preserving our past while forging our future.

<i>Amherstburg Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 1 Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improve trust between council and staff, and residents, by strengthening governance and internal accountability structures. ✓ Deliver transparent and efficient financial management. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase effective communication and engagement with residents. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop our staff team, resources, and workplace culture. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to deliver strong core municipal services. ✓ Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 3 Encourage Local Economic Prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage development of commercial and industrial lands. ✓ Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to facilitate downtown development for residents and visitors. ✓ Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal, and local governments, agencies, and organizations.
<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 2 Invest in Community Amenities and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain safe, reliable and accessible municipal infrastructure and facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages. <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and execute plans for town-owned lands (e.g. Duffy’s site, Belle Vue) <input type="checkbox"/> Create public access to water and waterfront <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PILLAR 4 Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define and communicate a vision for the Town’s future and identity. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote and plan for green and “climate change ready” development. <input type="checkbox"/> Review and implement policies that promote greater access to diverse housing. ✓ Protect the Town’s historic sites and heritage. ✓ Preserve the Town’s greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.

9. CONCLUSION:

The request from 2nd Amherstburg Scouting should be received and direction provided. Administration will amend the processes associated with future applications, communications and public announcements. Council can direct any other change to the program that it wishes to see.



Kevin Fox
Municipal Clerk / Risk Manager

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Grant Process.docx
Attachments:	- 2024 01 01 - Community Grants Program RM.pdf - 2024 01 01 Request for Grants to Community Groups - Application Form FINAL RM.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 4, 2025

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



Tracy Prince



Valerie Critchley



Kevin Fox