



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☒	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: West Hants Regional Municipality Committee of the Whole

Submitted by: _____
Kathy Kehoe, Director Community Development

Date: April 1, 2025

Subject: Grants and Contributions Policy RCOFN-012.00

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act - Section 65, power to expend money

RECOMMENDATION

Committee of the Whole recommend that Council adopt the amended West Hants Regional Municipality Grants and Contributions Policy.

BACKGROUND

Property ☐	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☐	Social ☒	Economic ☒	Councillor Activity ☐
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During Strategic Planning Session with Council, direction was given for staff to review and amend the Grants & Contributions Policy RCOFN-012.00 with respect to emergency funding for organizations and make recommendations regarding a more fair and equitable approval practice.

DISCUSSION

The grants and contributions process is designed to have one application intake per year with the annual application deadline being the third Thursday in February. This program is primarily designed for not-for-profit organizations with their volunteer-led initiatives.

Staff have reviewed the Grants and Contributions Policy and recommend the following changes be considered in an effort to achieve a fair process for all organizations:

- a) Grant Funding will only be considered during the annual application review period OR in the case of an Urgent Community Need. An urgent community need refers to a sudden issue that significantly affects the well-being, accessibility or sustainability of a community space. This need requires immediate attention and funding to prevent negative consequences. Examples of urgent community need include structural or safety concerns, disaster recovery, accessibility compliance or health and safety repairs.
- b) Expand the ability for support to organizations to apply for in-kind contribution if they have not received grant support from West Hants Regional Municipality in the current fiscal year. These donations would be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer or the Director Community Development and would not exceed an in-kind value of \$300.
- c) Organizations that are Canadian Charitable organizations are permitted to be considered for grant funding.
- d) Funding requests received outside of the established application period will not be considered unless deemed by the Chief Administrative Officer to be an Urgent Community Need. Organizations making these requests will be required to complete an application and submit the necessary budget and financial statements and would be presented to Council with a staff report.
- e) Evaluation criteria to be applied will include that the program/project fits within the objectives of the Municipality noted in section 2.0 as opposed to the vision/mandate of the municipality.

The attached policy, if adopted by Council, will provide clearer direction for staff, and will assist in the fair allocation of grant funds.

Staff further recommend that additional consideration be given to creating a funding stream that supports the *Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategic Plan Strategic Action #5. Help make businesses, community organizations, and events more accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities in alignment with Access by Design 2030: Achieving an Accessible Nova Scotia and Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan (2022-2025) -5.5 Establish a municipal grant program to financially support small businesses completing accessibility improvement projects.*

This recommendation will be presented as an amendment to this policy in advance of the 2026 Grants and Contributions application process opening in the fall of 2025.

NEXT STEPS

If approved as amended, staff will annually implement the Grants and Contributions Policy RCOFN-12.00.

If approved staff will proceed with further amending the Grants and Contributions Policy for Councils consideration prior to the grants and contributions application process opening in the fall 2025 to include a funding stream for grant applications specifically dealing with accessibility improvement projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All funding considerations except if deemed an Urgent Community Need will be approved on an annual basis, following the approval of the Operating Budget."

ALTERNATIVES

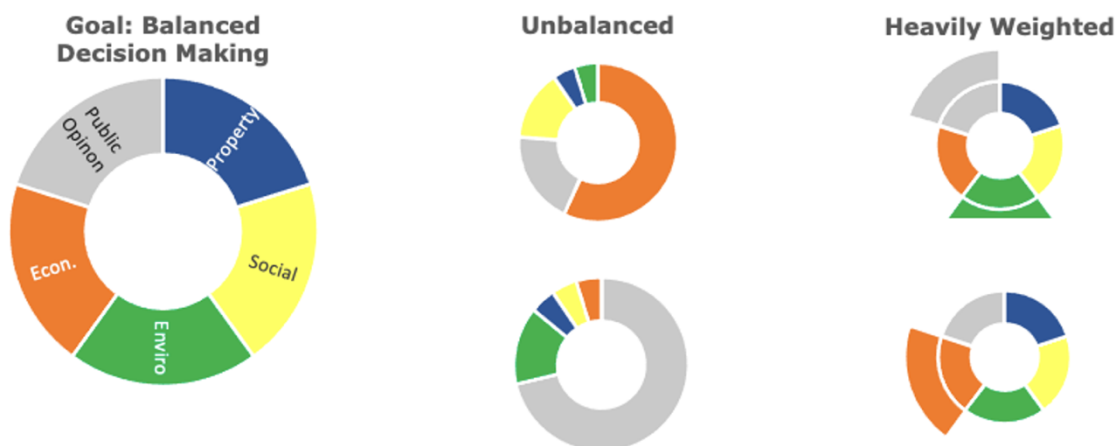
1. Committee of the Whole may choose to amend the policy as it is presented prior to recommending Council consider adopting the amended policy.
2. Committee of the Whole may choose to not approve the amended policy.
3. Committee of the Whole may choose to further consider an additional amendment to the policy to include an accessibility grant funding component.

ATTACHMENTS

RCOFN-12.00 Grants and Contributions Policy – amended draft.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

Council has been provided with a reference taken from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy , Appendix C "Decision Making by Council and Committee of the Whole" as a reminder of the principles highlighted for good decision making.



Report Prepared by: _____
Kathy Kehoe, Director Community Development

Report Reviewed by: _____
Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services

Report Approved by: _____
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE

The West Hants Regional Municipality wishes to recognize the valuable contributions provided through the volunteer efforts of community organizations and agencies on behalf of its residents. This policy demonstrates and formalizes Council's commitment to assist organizations which provide beneficial programs, services, or projects to the community while, at the same time, recognizing the financial constraints affecting the Municipality's ability to provide funding to these groups.

This policy will establish eligibility requirements, identify types of funding available, explain how this is established each year, and outline application, monitoring and reporting requirements. Application forms and guidelines will be developed by the Administration in support of the policy intent.

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to treat all organizations fairly, equitably, and reasonably, within the parameters established by Council as follows:

- a) Youth development
- b) Senior support and services
- c) Public safety
- d) Provincial events
- e) Heritage and Culture

On an annual basis Council will determine the amount of funding during the budget process.

3.0 AUTHORITY

Authority is provided under Section 65, Municipal Government Act, as amended. The total of the amounts paid for grants in a fiscal years' operating budget will not normally exceed 1.5% of the taxes for general municipal purposes levied by the municipality.

4.0 ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY

Pursuant to Section 65 of the *Municipal Government Act*, grants or contributions may be expended where required by the Municipality to a:

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- Society within the meaning of the Children and Family Services Act.
 - Mental health clinic in receipt of financial assistance from the province.
 - Exhibition held by an educational institution in the Municipality.
 - Club, association, or exhibition within the meaning of the Agriculture and Marketing Act.
 - Charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting, or social organization within the province.
 - Daycare licensed under the Day Care Act.
 - Registered Canadian charitable organization.
 - Volunteer fire and emergency services providers, as defined in Municipal Government Act, who are registered with the Municipality.

Heritage Property Act

Heritage designated properties within the boundaries of the West Hants Regional Municipality may be eligible for municipal grants and contributions not included within this policy.

5.0 TYPES OF GRANTS OR CONTRIBUTIONS AND MAXIMUM FUNDING ALLOCATION

Grants are generally provided in the form of funds, while contributions may be through in-kind support using municipal resources, both tied to a specific outcome. Both sources of support must be reported annually by the Municipality, as is required by legislation. In the case of an urgent community need, Council has the authority to fund projects outside of this Policy and the maximum approved funding allocations stated in this Policy. An urgent community need refers to a sudden issue that significantly affects the well-being, accessibility or sustainability of a community space. This need requires immediate attention and funding to prevent negative consequences. Examples of urgent community need include structural or safety concerns, disaster recovery, accessibility compliance or health and safety repairs.

5.1 Operating Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$1,500
- Operating funding for not-for-profit community groups to assist with general operating expenses, including administrative or insurance costs and program related expenses.

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5.2 Community Capital Project Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$2,500
- To assist in the expansion or improvement of an indoor or outdoor cultural, social, heritage, and recreation facilities and/or equipment for projects under \$2,500. *Funding will not be granted to purchasing recreation equipment that the Municipality can reasonably expect individuals or groups to buy for themselves.*
- A separate agreement may be required depending on the nature and value of the asset for which the funds are provided.

5.3 Public Safety Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$7,500, up to the amount set in the fiscal operating budget.
- Grants under this category are for non-profit organizations registered with the Municipality that provided or ensure public or community safety.

5.4 Community Recreation Program Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$1,000
- Recurring community recreation programs which Council has determined provide significant benefit to the broad community and are open to all members of the public.
- Assistance provided to groups interested in the creation, expansion and improvement or recreational opportunities in their communities.

5.5 Community Event Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$1,000
- Community Events that are of a cultural, social, or recreational significance to the community.

5.6 Special Events Operations & Promotion Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$5,000
- To provide assistance for special events operations and promotions that will see participants and spectators attend from outside the West Hants Regional Municipality. This funding will support events that foster good community relations, support culture, develop the local economy and tourism industry and enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors.

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5.7 Leadership Grants

- Maximum Contribution \$1,000
- Grants available for recreation groups seeking help to provide supervision and leadership to implement a program.
- Wanting to have representatives attend leadership training that will improve the function of the group or the quality of leadership.

5.8 Sponsorship Advertising/Donation of Prizes Requests

- Maximum contribution per organization per year \$100. Grants will only be awarded to the extent the current fiscal budget permits.
- To provide assistance for advertising to local not-for-profit organizations for projects, events or initiatives that benefit residents and are within the mandate of the Municipality.

5.9 Youth Travel Assistance

- Maximum Contribution Limits apply – Grants will only be awarded to the extent that the current fiscal budget permits.
- The Youth Travel Assistance Grant Program applies to residents of the West Hants Regional Municipality, 22 years of age or under, involved in non-profit minor sports or cultural activities, who have qualified to compete in sport championships/cultural events.

5.10 Community Trail Funding Program

- Maximum contribution - \$2,500
- The trail funding program supports community organizations in the maintenance and development of trails for public use.

5.11 Major Capital Project Grants

- To provide assistance for the expansion or improvement of an indoor or outdoor cultural, social, heritage and recreation facilities and/or equipment for capital projects
- A separate agreement may be required depending on the nature and value of the asset for which the funds are provided.
- Depending on the funding source identified by staff, additional requirements may be necessary to maintain eligibility.
 - Canadian Community Building Fund requirements:
 - Agreement to abide by the Municipal agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia, which includes having the ability to pay for the project before reimbursement from the Municipality
 - Community Energy Systems - \$2,500 limit
 - Cultural Infrastructure - \$5,000 limit

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- Tourism Infrastructure - \$5,000 limit
- Recreational Infrastructure - \$5,000 limit
- Broadband Connectivity - \$5,000 limit
- Trails - \$2,500 limit

5.12 Recreation Facility Capital Investment Project Grants

- Maximum Contribution –\$50,000
- To aid with expansion or improvement of indoor or outdoor not-for-profit community recreation facilities.
- Funding request is defined as a capital project partnered with the West Hants Regional Municipality with no greater than fifty percent (50%) of the funds being contributed by the Regional Municipality.
- In exceptional circumstances, Council may choose to contribute more than fifty percent (50%) of the cost of the project but will only do so when the need is clear and urgent, and all other sources of funding have been investigated.
- Projects must be completed during the fiscal year in which the funds are being requested. No carry-over of funds will be permitted.
- Projects must be for the betterment of the entire community and accessible by all residents and be Parks, Recreation and Culture related.
- Projects must follow the West Hants Regional Municipality Procurement and Tendering Policy RCOFN-003.00 or a procurement process approved by the West Hants Regional Municipality.
- The total amount funded through the Recreation Facility Investment Projects grant program will be determined by West Hants Regional Council on a case-by-case basis.
- Depending on the funding source identified by staff, additional requirements may be necessary to maintain eligibility.
 - Canadian Community Building Fund requirements:
 - Agreement to abide by the Municipal agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia, which includes having the ability to pay for the project before reimbursement from the Municipality.

5.13 In-kind Contributions

- The provision of Municipal property/facilities, materials, or resources to support a service, program, project, or event.

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6.0 FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

An applicant organization must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for a Grant or Contribution.

- 6.1 There can only be maximum of two applications per organization per fiscal year.
- 6.2 Grant applicants should be able to demonstrate active fundraising efforts to support the continuation of a program, project, or service. The West Hants Regional Municipality should not be considered as a primary source of funding for the organization. (This Section 6.2 is not applicable to those applicants who provide volunteer services on behalf of the Municipality in lieu of the Municipality providing the services directly, e.g., Volunteer Fire Societies.)
- 6.3 Funding requests can be defined as events/projects/programs which support, sustain, promote, inform, educate, celebrate, preserve, and/or provide access to the arts, culture, environment, heritage, safety and/or health activities for a specific or general demographic or geographic group.
- 6.4 Requests for financial assistance for events of a Municipal, Provincial or National significance which would be expected to bring economic and/or public relations benefit to the Municipality.
- 6.5 The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to all the following principles:
 - a) Accessibility (open to all Municipal residents)
 - b) Effectiveness (funding supports specific Municipal goals or objectives)
 - c) Accountability (through sound management and financial practices)
- 6.6 Requests for financial assistance for the Recreation Facility Capital Investment Project must submit audited financial statements for three consecutive years prior to the application year. Requests for financial assistance under this category must also submit details of all funding sources.

7.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 7.1 Municipal Council sets the funding limits and annual budget allotments within this Grants and Contributions Policy.

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- 7.2 Applicants will complete the appropriate Municipal application form and supply the requested documentation.
- 7.3 Application deadlines and expiry periods may apply.
- 7.4 All applications except for youth travel and sponsorship/donations are approved by Council and applicants will be notified by letter of approval or denial. The letter will state any terms and conditions that apply to the grant approvals. In-kind donations may be considered outside of this policy if the organization has not received municipal support in the fiscal year. These donations must be approved by either the Chief Administrative Officer or the Director of Community Development and would not exceed an in-kind value of \$300 per organization.
- 7.5 Applications for youth travel and sponsorship/donations are reviewed and approved by either the Director of Community Development or the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 7.6 Applicants should demonstrate community support, fundraising efforts, and efficient use of resources, sound business practices and development of volunteers.
- 7.7 A financial statement and pertinent documentation must be filed with the Municipality annually.
- 7.8 The Municipality reserves the right to deny any application it deems not within its mandate.
- 7.9 All proposed work must comply with Municipal, Provincial and Federal regulations.
- 7.10 The following are the evaluation criteria that will be applied when reviewing grant applications:
- a. Project/program fits within the objectives of the Municipality (Section 2.0).
 - b. The organization is a not-for-profit and in good standing with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies or a registered Canadian charitable organization.

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- c. The application is for a program, event, facility is for public community purpose.
- d. A financial need is demonstrated.
- e. The organization is sourcing other funding partners.
- f. The project is economical.
- g. The project/program brings value to the residents of the Municipality.
- h. The funding provided by the Municipality will enable the organization to leverage dollars from other funding agencies.
- i. The facility, program or event provides a good return on investment.
- j. The applicant has demonstrated that they will recognize the Municipality's contribution.
- k. The organization has demonstrated long-term sustainability.
- l. The applicant has demonstrated its own commitment to the project (i.e., In-kind donations, financial contribution etc.)

- 7.11 Individuals are not eligible for funding under the Grants and Contributions Policy except with written authorization through recognized organizations or where legislation allows the Municipality to do so.
- 7.12 Funding will not be provided to offset accumulated deficits or funding shortfalls. Funding consideration is based only on budgeted revenues and expenditures in the year for which the assistance is requested.
- 7.13 The applicant organization must spend or allocate grant funding within the current fiscal year for which it has been approved and for the sole purpose under which it has been granted unless approved by the Municipality.
- 7.14 Requests received under the urgent community need must complete an application form and include all necessary budget and financial statements. Requests of this nature must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer to be submitted to Municipal Council and accompanied with a staff report.

GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

8.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 8.1 Requests for funding under this program must be submitted on or before the third Thursday in February annually. Public notification will be provided of the submission date and requirements for all grant programs.
- 8.2 All applications must be accompanied by the required documentation to be considered complete when received.
- 8.3 Incomplete applications may not be processed.
- 8.4 Late applications received after the deadline set by Administration will not be processed unless approved by the Chief Administrative Officer to be an Urgent Community Need.
- 8.5 Applicants receiving a grant or contribution under the Grants and Contributions Policy will not be eligible to receive a grant or contribution under any other grant program established by Council in the same fiscal year. This does not apply to organizations exempted under the Property Tax Exemption policy.

9.0 GENERAL TERMS

- 9.1 Granting of assistance in any one year or over several years is not a commitment to future funding.
- 9.2 Applications for in-kind support will be forwarded to the respective department for review and a separate report to Council will be prepared for consideration and approval during the approval process.

10.0 THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

- 10.1 The Administration of West Hants Regional Municipality receive, and process written and complete submissions by applying established parameters, within the budget approved by Council.
- 10.2 Grant applicants determined to be ineligible for funding will be notified, in writing as soon as is practically possible.

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- 10.3 The Chief Administrative Officer will provide a written report to Council on the recommended disposition of funds, annually.
- 10.4 Requests for grants and contributions received outside of the established grant application period will not be considered unless it is deemed by the Chief Administrative Officer to be an urgent community need.
- 10.5 Successful applicants will be notified with an official letter with instructions and reporting requirements.
- 10.6 Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, Section (65C), a list of grants approved by West Hants Regional Municipality to community organizations will be published annually on the municipal website. The information will include the name of the applicant, name of the organization and grant funding approved.

11.0 RELATED PROGRAMS & INFORMATION

- 11.1 Youth Travel Assistance Program Guidelines
- 11.2 Community Trail Funding Program Guidelines
- 11.3 Community Development In-kind Contribution Grant
- 11.4 Grants to Recognized Fire Services
- 11.5 Registered Heritage Properties Grant

12.0 REPEAL

- 12.1 The Grants and Contribution Policy, RCOFN-012.00, dated, is hereby repealed.

I, Deanna Snair, Municipal Clerk of the West Hants Regional Municipality, in the Province of Nova Scotia, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Policy as adopted by the Council of the West Hants Regional Municipality at a meeting duly called and held on the ____ day of ____ (month), ____ (year).

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

D. Snair
Municipal Clerk

<i>Adoption</i>	
<i>Notice to Council:</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Approval:</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Description:</i>	