

Municipality of *Bluewater*

Council Policy

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| Policy: | Community Grant and Vibrancy Funding |
| Effective Date: | July 8, 2024 |
| Approved By: | By-law 63-2024 |
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Purpose

The Municipality of Bluewater has developed this policy to address receipt of vibrancy funding from the wind turbine companies and to establish how these funds will be distributed so as to address current capital needs of the community while providing sustainable funding for future budgets. Furthermore, this policy establishes the procedures for the “Community Grant and Vibrancy Funds Program”, which provides limited financial assistance to community groups and organizations within the Municipality to assist with programs, projects or special events. The program exists to recognize the value of these groups to the well-being and growth of the community and in helping the Municipality retain a strong community focus.

The Municipality has three agreements which offer financial assistance to the Municipality:

- 1) The “Northland Power Community Reserve Fund” developed through the Municipality’s agreement with Grand Bend Wind Limited Partnership (“Grand Bend”);
- 2) The “Varna Wind Community Reserve Fund” developed through the Municipality’s agreement with Varna Wind LP, and;
- 3) The “Goshen Wind Community Reserve Fund” developed through the Municipality’s agreement with Goshen Wind LP

As per the agreements with Grand Bend Wind Limited Partnership (By-Law #10-2017), Varna Wind LP (By-Law #53-2018), and Goshen Wind LP (By-Law #54-2018), the following funds can be used to support the following:

- (a) Expenditures relating to energy sustainability (i.e. municipal renewable energy systems; vehicle fleet upgrades; building energy-efficiency upgrades; conservation programs);
- (b) land stewardship initiatives (i.e. habitat creation/improvement; tree planting; shoreline rehabilitation);
- (c) expenditures relating to development and construction of the Municipality's recreational facilities (i.e. arenas, community centres, pools, sports facilities, parks, trails, etc.);

- (d) expenditures for improvement of community and protective services (i.e. police, fire, EMS, healthcare);
- (e) expenditures related to roads and urban infrastructure;
- (f) expenditures related to education and job training;
- (g) expenditures related to economic development initiatives, including hosting events, creating and publishing promotional materials, advertising, travel and attendance at events, and/or the development and establishment of community improvement plans, business improvement areas, economic development corporations, municipal service corporations, small business incubators; or
- (h) other community-related activities sanctioned by the Municipality.

Definitions

“Capital Projects” are defined as those that are one-time purchase of a tangible asset.

“Financial Assistance”:

- Direct Grants
- Use of Municipal Property/facilities at reduced or no cost
- Fee waivers (permits, etc.)
- Municipal Staff support
- Equipment supply
- Materials supply
- Insurance coverage

“In-Kind” refers to a contribution from the municipality to cover goods, services or transactions not involving a monetary contribution.

“Non-Profit Organization” as defined in the Income Tax Act Income Tax Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. 1 (5th Supp.)): a club, society, or association that is not a charity and that is organized and operated solely for:

- social welfare
- civic improvement
- pleasure or recreation
- any other purpose except profit

“Special Interest Group” refers to a non-profit or charitable organization that solely focuses on political, religious or frustrates the work of the Wind Projects.

“Tangible Asset” as defined in the Public Sector Accounting Board Handbook as:

- Physical in nature;
- Has a useful live extending beyond a year;
- Can be used on a continuing basis;
- Are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, for administrative purposes or for the development, construction, maintenance or repair of other tangible assets;

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all organizations requesting financial assistance for ongoing projects within the municipal boundaries of Bluewater and provides eligibility criteria for the two funding streams to assist Council and the applicants in navigating the process. The two funding streams are:

- Community Grant Stream
- Community Vibrancy Funding Stream

Funding Options and Criteria

When reviewing the governance and administration of the Wind Companies Community Reserve Funds, Council determined the following Allocation of the funding received each year:

- Ten percent (10%) of the funds received annually will be set aside for the Community Grant Program;
- Sixty percent (60%) of the funds received annually will be used in the current year budget;
- Thirty percent (30%) of the funds received annually will be invested for future sustainability;

The maximum amount of funding available through either stream of funding will equal Ten percent (10%) of the funds received annually will be set aside for the Community Grant and Community Vibrancy Program. Any unused amounts from the 10% Community Grant and Community Vibrancy Program can be used in the current year budget.

There are two streams of funding available through this policy to provide limited financial assistance to local non-profit organizations: The Community Grant stream and the Community Vibrancy Funding stream. Organizations will be permitted to submit only one application per year for either the Community Grant stream or the Community Vibrancy stream. Capital projects for municipal property will be funded through the Community Vibrancy Fund only and will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with respect to the funding request.

Community Grant Stream

The Municipality of Bluewater's Community Grant Program provides limited funding for projects that enhance and enrich the community. Council makes all funding decisions based on local needs and priorities and in conjunction with Council's approved budget, strategic goals and objectives.

Grant funds are intended to support project or event-based initiatives in the areas of:

- Community Services
- Arts and Culture
- Social Services
- Environment

Applicants will be required to identify which Funding Category their project or event falls into. The categories of funding are as follows:

- Community Events/Parades*
- Tourism/Economic Development
- Arts/Culture/Heritage
- Community Social Assistance

*Note: Organizers of Parades are required to provide liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000. The cost of obtaining such insurance may form part of any grant application, along with the necessary Municipal Staff support.

Conditions of Funding:

- a) All requests for financial donations and grants should be considered having regard for the Municipality's current budget. Under normal circumstances, only one request per organization is to be considered in a calendar year.
- b) All grants/awards will be assessed in terms of the need for the project; cost effectiveness; financial viability; contribution to the quality of life in the community; community response, and apparent quality.
- c) Council holds the final granting authority to make decisions regarding funding applications.
- d) In general, organizations from which the Municipality purchases services or with which it has contracts, will not be eligible.
- e) Organizations whose primary focus is not within the Municipality shall not be considered for a municipal donation or grant.
- f) Organizations that may be located within the Municipality but serve a purpose extending outside the municipality shall not be considered.
- g) One-time special requests for assistance will be considered on an individual merit basis. Examples of these types of requests would be flood or ice storm disaster relief requests either locally or on a broader scope.
- h) The grant should not be considered as the primary source of funding for the organization. Grants are intended to be supplementary to main sources of funding for organizations. The group must show exploration of other financial support and option (i.e. fundraising) and adequate volunteer support.
- i) The Municipality, through its grants process, will not contribute to outstanding deficits.
- j) There will be ongoing consideration given to providing school awards to local schools.
- k) There will be no consideration given to requests for financial assistance from recreation groups.
- l) The granting of financial assistance in any year is not to be regarded as a commitment by the Municipality to continue such assistance in future years.
- m) No financial donations or grants will be considered unless specifically authorized by this policy.
- n) In making grants, the Municipality may impose such conditions as it deems fit.
- o) A maximum of \$2,000 per organization has been established for financial contributions.
- p) Funding requests for capital projects shall be submitted through the Community Vibrancy

Funding Stream. Capital projects do not include advertising or promotions (including brochures, maps, etc.) or annually purchased items (i.e. flowers).

- q) A maximum of \$2,000 per organization has been established for in-kind services.
- r) Any refundable deposits (i.e. damage deposits) will not be waived.
- s) Applications can be made for either a financial contribution or an in-kind of services contribution. Applications cannot be made for both.
- t) There will be no consideration given to requests from Special Interest Groups.

Community Vibrancy Funding Stream

Each year, Council will determine the financial commitment to the Community Vibrancy Funding Stream.

- a) Requests for funding must fall under one of the following categories:
 - i. Energy sustainability
 - ii. Land stewardship
 - iii. Recreation projects
 - iv. Funding for ongoing and/or annual cultural and/or historical events which are not capital projects, but promote tourism and/or historical significance to Bluewater
 - v. Any of the categories identified in the Community Grant stream
- b) A maximum of \$10,000 per organization per year has been established for financial contributions.
- c) In-kind services applications are not eligible under the Community Vibrancy Stream.
- d) Priority funding will be given to one-time capital projects that benefit the community.
- e) Events shall apply for funding through the Community Grant Stream.

Eligibility

- a) Applicants must demonstrate the need for the specific project/program. Each proposal must identify a specific defined benefit and outcome and be located within Bluewater.
- b) Applicants, with the exception of local elementary and secondary schools, must be non-profit or charitable organization community groups and organizations governed by a community-based volunteer board of directors.
- c) Applicants must provide an organizational budget and a proposal specific budget. Grants will not be considered for organizations offering services for which other governments have a clear, legislative responsibility (e.g. education, health).
- d) Community Vibrancy Fund applications must include three quotations for services/materials required for the project. Some exceptions may be made in the event that the service/item is unique and is only provided by one supplier. Council holds the authority to grant an exception relating to this.
- e) Please note grant applications that are eligible under other grant programs may be given a lesser priority in the evaluation process.

- f) Council holds the final granting authority to make decisions regarding funding applications.
- g) There will be no consideration given to requests for financial assistance from recreation groups.
- h) There will be no consideration given to requests from Special Interest Groups.

Eligibility Guidelines (Community Grant Stream & Community Vibrancy Stream)

- a) Applicants may apply for a grant of up to 25% of the project budget. The final grant will be based on up to 25% of the net project costs or 25% of the project budget, whichever is less. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered at Council's discretion.
- b) Applications will not be considered from organizations where an existing agreement for financial funding is currently in effect.
- c) The budget submitted should be for the total project. It should identify all sources of income including other grants, self-generated revenue, contributions, etc.
- d) In addition to submitting an application and appropriate financial information all organizations requesting grants may be asked to make a brief presentation to Council.
- e) Application packages are available through the Municipal office or on the Municipal website. Completed applications, on the appropriate application form, are accepted once a year and must be received by the Municipal office by September 15th.
- f) All application forms and supporting documents must be received no later than 4:30pm, September 15 each year. In the event that September 15 falls on a weekend, applications will be accepted until 4:30 pm the Monday immediately following the weekend.
- g) Completed application forms must either be submitted to the Municipal office in person or to the Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer via email.
- h) Availability of application forms will be advertised no later than August of each year and will be advertised on the Municipal website and through social media.
- i) Organizations may submit one application per year, for either funding stream. For organizations requesting assistance for multiple events, information must be submitted for each event/project.
- j) If an umbrella organization is making an application for a financial grant or in-kind contribution, the affiliated organization(s) must prove eligibility under this policy if the requested services/grant will directly impact them.
- k) Applications will not be considered for items/events/projects, etc. that the current term of council has passed motions to not provide funding for.

Application Review

- a) All requests for financial donations and in-kind grants will be considered having regard for the Municipality's annual budget. Applications will be reviewed for completeness, accuracy, and compliance with this policy.
- b) Incomplete applications will be returned to the organization with a list of the additional information required. Completed applications must be submitted by September 15.

Applications received after this date will not be considered for a grant.

- c) Applications must be submitted on the Community Grant and Vibrancy Funding Application form.
- d) Council is the final granting authority.
- e) The Treasurer's office will notify all applicants of Council's decisions once the municipal budget has been passed.
- f) In order to expedite the process, for both funding streams, all funding requests will be submitted to the Wind Companies for their review and pre-approval prior to receiving Council approval.

Accountability/Obligations Upon Receiving a Grant

- a) Applicants awarded a grant will be held accountable for the expenditure of the funds in accordance with the stated objectives/plans. Grants in future years will be reviewed based on past demonstrated fiscal responsibility of the applicants.
- b) Funds granted are not transferable between projects or groups without prior Council approval, and must be used for the specific purposes outlined in the application. Misuse of funds may result in the applicant being disqualified from receiving a grant for a period of two years.
- c) Project evaluation forms (provided) with supporting documents must be completed and submitted to the Treasury Department within two months of the completion of the event or project, but in all cases, by September 15. Exceptions will be made for events and/or projects not completed by this date.
- d) Groups must submit a financial report outlining the project income and expenditures.
- e) The most recent financial statements are to be submitted by April 30 of the year following the grant.
- f) Grant recipients must acknowledge the Municipal contribution to the project in all related public information, printed material and media coverage. The Municipal logo is available through the Clerk's office.

This is an accessible transcription of the policy document attached to by-law 63-2024. Formatting will appear differently but content is the same.