



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of October 19, 2017

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 10, 2017
From: Susanne Thompson, Director of Finance
Chris Coates, City Clerk
Subject: Strategic Plan Grant Program - External Grant Review Committee
Recommendations on Policy and Process

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to:

1. Amend the Strategic Plan Grant policy, application process, application form and review process recommended by the External Grant Review Committee as follows:
 - a. Policy:
 - i. Deem capital requests ineligible
 - ii. Limit organizations to a maximum of 3 consecutive grants for the same purpose
 - iii. Limit applications to initiatives that are based in the City of Victoria, or the portion of the activity that takes place in the City of Victoria
 - iv. Add the following assessment criteria:
 1. Strength of organization
 2. Evidence of need
 3. Community impact
 4. Feasibility
 - b. Application process:
 - i. Implement an annual weighting of the eligible Strategic Plan objectives by Council to inform potential applicants of Council's priorities for the year.
 - ii. Specify a consistent timeline for the granting process
 1. Council's weighting of Strategic Plan Objectives – October
 2. Application intake open – November 15
 3. Application deadline – January 31
 4. External Grant Review Committee recommendations to Council – April 30
 5. Project period – July 1 to June 30
 6. Recruit two new members for the External Grant Review Committee – August
 7. Project evaluation reports to City – September 30
 8. External Grant Review Committee reviews evaluation reports for the prior year – January 31
 - iii. Update the Grant page on the City's website clearly outlining eligibility criteria, Council weighting of strategic priorities, assessment criteria, the range and average of awards in previous years, encourage diverse funding

- sources, provide links to Grant Writing Handbook and "Other Funding Sources" from the Victoria Foundation's website
- iv. As part of the application package, clearly state the largest and average awarded amounts from the prior year
- c. Application form and reporting:
 - i. Only list the strategic objectives that have been weighted by Council
 - ii. Only allow applicants to pick one strategic objective that best fits their application
 - iii. Add assessment criteria for strength of organization, evidence of need, community impact and feasibility
 - iv. Restrict the length of applications (character count, and no supplementary pages)
 - v. Establish consistent submission format/number of documents
 - vi. Refine the budget template and clarify requirements
 - vii. Require that grant applications include key objectives, how they plan to measure success, and also reporting back on how the applicant met the objectives
 - viii. Clearly outline the maximum 3 consecutive grants for the same purpose
- d. Review process
 - i. Continue using Council weighted strategic plan objectives
 - ii. Continue using the assessment criteria (strength of organization, evidence of need, community impact and feasibility)
 - iii. Continue using the evaluation matrix developed by the External Grant Review Committee
 - iv. Maintain a five member Committee, but add overlapping terms
- 2. Amend the Term of Reference for the External Grant Review Committee to provide for rotating membership with overlapping terms starting for the 2018 granting year.
 - a. Three members for two cycle terms
 - b. Two members for a one cycle term, with annual recruitment to replace these two members
 - c. The two outgoing members to be responsible for evaluating reports from current year grant recipients

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council appointed an external grant review committee to review Strategic Plan Grant applications based on merit for Council's consideration of approval for the 2017 granting year. At the June 22, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council awarded this year's grants based on the Committee's recommendations and also directed staff to meet with the Committee to gather feedback on and recommendations for improvements to the policy and process. Staff met with the Committee members to discuss the policy, application process, and the review process and support their recommendations for improvement. The Committee's report is attached as Appendix A.

Council appointed this Committee for a one-year pilot term. Based on the success of this process, staff recommend the continuation of this Committee. The Committee members have recommended that the membership remain at five positions, with ongoing rotation of two members leaving the Committee and three members remaining each year allowing new members to join but also providing for continuity of the membership from year to year. Should Council wish to update the Terms of Reference as recommended, appointments for the following year will be brought to

Council for consideration at a separate meeting. The current Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix B.

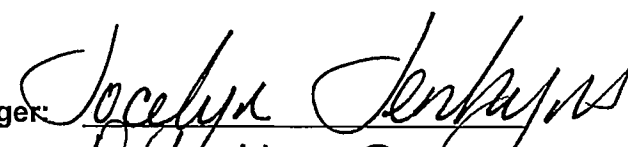
For Council's information, attached as Appendix C is the April 23, 2015 and June 4, 2015 reports outlining proposed changes to the Strategic Grant Program and feedback from impacted organizations to those changes. Council may find this information relevant as some of the Committee recommendations are similar to what was proposed in 2015 (limits listed on page 7 of the April 23 report including, requirement to be located within the City of Victoria, ongoing operating grants, capital equipment to be ineligible for example.)

Respectfully submitted,


Susanne Thompson
Director of Finance


Chris Coates
City Clerk

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Oct 11, 2017

List of Attachments

Appendix A: External Grant Review Committee Recommendations

Appendix B: External Grant Review Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix C: April 23, 2015 and June 4, 2015 GPC reports: Summary of Public Input on the Proposed Grant Process