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Item No. 9.1.1
Grants Committee
October 17, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of Grants Committee

SUBMITTED BY:



Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Saltwire Holiday Parade of Lights Funding Request**

ORIGIN

Application received pursuant to Administrative Order Number 2014-021-GOV – *Respecting Regional Special Events Grants*.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter
Section 79A

(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality

Administrative Order Number 2014-021-GOV: *Respecting Regional Special Events Grants*

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve an event grant in the amount of \$25,000, from the 2022/2023 Operating Budget – C760 Community/Civic Events, to fund the Saltwire Holiday Parade of Lights contingent on the in-person event taking place;
2. Pending the approval of the 2023/2024 budget, approve an event grant in the amount of \$25,000, from the 2023/2024 Operating Budget – C760 Community/Civic Events, to fund the Saltwire Holiday Parade of Lights contingent on the in-person event taking place; and,
3. Pending the approval of the 2024/2025 budget, approve an event grant in the amount of \$25,000, from the 2024/2025 Operating Budget – C760 Community/Civic Events, to fund the Saltwire Holiday Parade of Lights contingent on the in-person event taking place.

BACKGROUND

There was no application to the 2022/23 Regional Special Events program (Established Festivals program) submitted by the Holiday Parade of Lights Society for the 2022 Saltwire Holiday Parade of Lights (SHPL) event. Staff contacted the SHPL staff person on record several times, by phone and email, to alert them of the date of the 2022/23 intake period. After the intake period closed, it was further noted that no application was received so staff made contact again but received no response. After further investigation, it was discovered that there have been several staff changes and vacancies within the Saltwire team, including former members of the Holiday Parade of Lights Society Board. Once staff received this information and a new contact was identified, staff sent an application to the relevant program, to be considered as a late submission, and a completed application was received on June 22, 2022.

Staff undertake the grant application and evaluation process as outlined in Administrative Order (AO) 2014-021-GOV *Respecting Regional Special Events Grants*. Within the AO, Section 35, Referral by Council states: “*The question of grant funding for a particular event pursuant to this Administrative Order may be referred by Council to a Standing Committee or to the Council in Committee for a recommendation to the Council on whether to provide grant funding.*” Should the Committee agree to accept a late application based on the extenuating circumstances outlined above, this report outlines the recommendation for funding the SHPL.

DISCUSSION

Holiday Parade of Lights Society is the organization responsible for hosting the annual Holiday Parade of Lights event. Every year, during the month of November, thousands of people line the streets of downtown Halifax to kick off the holiday season watching festive floats equipped with music and lights, marching bands, dancers, and ending with a viewing of Santa Claus. Thousands of additional people, who cannot attend the live in-person event, tune in to Eastlink TV to watch the parade broadcast live. This year the event will take place on November 19, 2022, and organizers are expecting 75,000 people to once again line the streets of downtown Halifax to attend this annual festive event. The Holiday Parade of Lights budget is \$67,500.

The municipality has funded the Holiday Parade of Lights for the past 18 years and has awarded the maximum grant of \$25,000 as an Established Festivals program since 2015. The Holiday Parade of Lights Society is requesting \$25,000 of three-year sustainable funding to help cover the \$35,000 of municipal service costs to safely host this event in downtown Halifax.

Eligibility

The definition of this program states:

Established Community Festivals: provides a maximum annual grant of \$25,000 and up to three (3) year sustainable funding commitment to organizations that deliver events that:

- (i) are held a maximum of seven (7) consecutive days;*
- (ii) are organized primarily for the benefit and enjoyment of residents;*
- (iii) are accessible to the public with free or low-cost activities;*
- (iv) have been in existence for three (3) consecutive years; and*
- (v) have a minimum budget of \$10,000.*

The SHPL is eligible for consideration under the Established Community Festivals program of the Regional Special Events Grants.

Funding Approach

The Community Celebrations, Established Community Festivals, and Significant Anniversaries programs have a total budget of \$215,000, funded from the Operating Budget C760. Within the 2022/2023 Regional Special Events Grant Report, which was approved by Regional Council on May 17, 2022, \$192,875 was

awarded to 47 various organizations with \$22,125 remaining. The intent was to re-open the intake for Established Community Festivals in 2023/2024, using the remaining funds however, if approved to fund the Holiday Parade of Lights at \$25,000 annually for three years, the allocated budget to fund events within the Community Celebrations, Established Community Festivals, and Significant Anniversaries programs would be \$2,875 over budget this fiscal. However, as two Established Community Festivals cancelled their events for the 2022/2023 fiscal year, \$5,500 in funding will not be released and will offset the \$2,875. For 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, the Community Celebrations and Significant Anniversaries will open with a budget of \$4,000, however there will be no budget capacity to accept applications in the Established Community Festivals program until 2025/2026.

There are no outstanding reports or funds owing to the municipality by the applicant. The event would be required to follow the COVID-19 Ongoing Approach to Funding, as referenced in the 2022/2023 Regional Special Events Report, and if the impacts of COVID-19 prevent the ability to host in-person, hybrid or virtual events and festivals, no grant award will be released.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for this Established Community Festival can be accommodated in the approved 2022/2023 operating budget (C760-6919). All 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 recommendations are subject to availability of funds, and final approval of the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 budgets.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low. To determine this, consideration was given to financial and reputational risk.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Information regarding program eligibility and applicant timelines are posted on the HRM website. Staff contact all previously funded Regional Special Events Grants recipients, within the past three years, to advise of the 2022/2023 intake period opening and deadline for submission. Communication is ongoing with program clients on the status of events.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Grants Committee may choose to recommend that Regional Council decline the late application or amend the amount of the event grant in accordance with 2014-021-GOV, within the budget capacity of C760.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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