

DATE OF MEETING APRIL 20, 2022

AUTHORED BY CHRISTY WOOD, SOCIAL PLANNER

SUBJECT WELCOME RECEPTION FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To present Council with information regarding funding for a Welcome Reception for new immigrants and refugees.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Meeting held on 2022-APR-04, Council passed a motion directing Staff:

“To prepare a report for the 2022-APR-20 Finance and Audit Committee meeting, with options and funding for a Welcome Reception for new immigrants and refugees.”

The City of Nanaimo has hosted an annual Welcome Reception for newcomers and refugees in partnership with the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS) between 2012 and 2018, and provided funding in 2019 to an event hosted by CVIMS. The purpose of the reception is to welcome immigrants and refugees to the City and connect them with the various services offered by local elected officials including Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Nanaimo RCMP, various City Departments, and the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District #68. The event is celebratory in nature and family friendly where light refreshments are served.

The City has a current line item in the 2022 Budget for the Welcome Reception totalling \$4,500. Total event expenses for 2017 were \$2,573 and in 2018, \$2,750. In 2019, as an alternative to hosting the event, CVIMS suggested the City provide funding to sponsor dinner tickets for newcomers to participate in the Nanaimo Newcomer Awards celebration held 2019-SEP-19. The City subsequently contributed \$2,200 to this event. During 2020 and 2021, the event was not pursued due to the pandemic and staffing capacity/changes.

DISCUSSION

On 2022-APR-04, a delegation presented by Mikaela Torres (Executive Director, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society) and former City of Nanaimo Councillors Merv Unger and Diane Brennan spoke to Council regarding reinstating an annual Welcome Reception for new immigrants and refugees.

This year, the Executive Director of CVIMS, has indicated that there is a desire to resume the opportunity for immigrants and refugees to learn more about the services and resources provided in Nanaimo during a fall 2022 Welcome Reception event. It is estimated that for 2022, a Welcome Reception would cost approximately \$3,900. This amount would cover the cost of the space rental

at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre; audio/visual equipment; light refreshments; honoraria for Elders in attendance; welcome certificates; and contingency. The already allocated \$4,500 for 2022 will provide sufficient funds for a Welcome Reception.]

CONCLUSION

The City has existing funding allocated and an ongoing partnership with CVIMS to proceed with a Welcome Reception event for 2022.]

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City has hosted and/ funded a Welcome Reception for newcomers and refugees annually between 2012 and 2018. In 2019, the City provided funding directly to CVIMS to support a Nanaimo Newcomer Awards Ceremony. During 2020 and 2021, the event was not pursued due to the pandemic and staffing capacity/changes.
- CVIMS would like to collaborate with the City and resume the annual Welcome Reception in the fall of 2022.
- The current funds of \$4,500 allocated to the Welcome Reception is sufficient to cover the expenses to host an event in 2022.

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