

DATE OF MEETING [SEPTEMBER 21, 2022]

AUTHORED BY [JAMIE SLATER, MANAGER, REVENUE SERVICES]

SUBJECT CONSIDERATION OF OTHER GRANT APPLICATION (CATNAP SOCIETY)

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain Council approval for the Other Grant application received from the CatNap (Cats Needing Aid and Protection) Society.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Award an Other Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2022 calendar year to the CatNap Society, with funding of \$2,000 from the existing Other Grants budget, and \$13,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and that the 2022-2026 Financial Plan be amended accordingly; and
2. Add decision point for Council consideration to the 2023-2027 Financial Plan deliberations to increase the annual funding amount for the 'Other Grant' stream.

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo maintains an annual program to award civic grant funding to eligible non-profit organizations operating in the City of Nanaimo. The intent of the Other Grant is to offer another avenue to community organizations that do not fit into any categories of any of the specific grant programs.

The criteria for awarding the Other Grant includes:

- Large number of volunteers
- Registered non-profit society
- Demonstrated financial need
- Accessible to large portion of the community

In addition, the kind of funding for other grants is outlined in the policy as follows:

- Educational funding
- Emergency funding
- Capital grants on a matching basis up to a maximum of \$5,000
- In-kind funding for facility rental

A copy of the current Grants Policy and Guidelines document is attached to his report as ATTACHMENT A. Specific direction on the evaluation of application for Other Grant is found under Section 6 (e).

In the past, funding has been provided to the Nanaimo & District SPCA through the Other Grants program. The most recent funding provided to the SPCA was for \$25,000 towards their Spay Neuter Program (SNIP). The budget was split between 2019 and 2020 with funds coming from general taxation.

DISCUSSION

The CatNap Society is requesting an Other Grant of \$15,000, and a copy of the application is attached as ATTACHMENT B.

In December 2019, Allan Neilson, of Neilson Strategies, was retained by the City to conduct a review of the City's Animal Control services. At the 2020-JUN-08 Special Council meeting, Mr. Neilson presented his findings and report entitled "Animal Contract Service Review" and outlined the key issues and recommendations.

One of Mr. Nielsen's recommendations was that:

"The City should consider providing some level of financial assistance to support CatNap's activities. It is not suggested that the City play a direct role in the in the TNR (Trap, Neuter Release) program – the City has enough other animal control responsibilities on which to focus. The City could, however, provide a financial contribution in the form of an annual grant-in-aid to support the Society's work, and to help ensure its sustainability."

For over 22 years, CatNap had addressed the suffering of cats who have been left to fend for themselves. CatNap rescues unwanted stray and abandoned semi-feral and feral cats, help them receive appropriate veterinary care for spay/neuter, and diagnosis/treatment for infections, parasite burden and injuries, socialize them in foster care and adopt them whenever possible.

Some of the programs and services CatNap provides are:

- Cat rescue
- Provision of veterinary care
- Trap-Neuter-Release stray/feral cats
- Assign caregivers to provide food, water and shelter to released feral cats

The society is run by approximately 90 volunteers who donate over 30,000 hours per year. While the society does charge an adoption fee, these fees do not compensate for the diagnosis/treatment of complex medical needs required for many of the rescued cats before they made are available for adoption.

CatNap's approaches to self-generated income include:

- Adoption fees
- Donation campaigns
- Various online donation/fundraising platforms
- Fundraising

Correspondence with the CatNap Society has indicated that “they are not in a position to continue to cope without City financial support for our 100% volunteer-based charity and can no longer bear the financial responsibility of managing the stray/feral/abandoned cats of Nanaimo on our own without that support, nor do we believe we should be expected to do so.” To date, the Society has not received funding support from the City of Nanaimo.

As such, the CatNap Society is applying for an Other Grant under the emergency funding category and the total one-time grant request is \$15,000. CatNap Society meets the grant awarding criteria contained in the Grants Policy and Guidelines document.

From a funding perspective, there is currently \$2,000 remaining in the existing ‘Other Grants’ budget. In order to fund the entire grant request, Council would need to choose to fund the remaining \$13,000 through the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

In future years, Council could consider allocating more funding to the ‘Other Grants’ program, as the existing \$7,000 annual budget has consistently been exceeded for many years. This would provide more annual funding options for organizations like the Catnap Society to apply to. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council:

1. Approve an Other Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2022 calendar year to the CatNap Society, with funding of \$2,000 from the existing Other Grants budget, and \$13,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and that the 2022-2026 Financial Plan be amended accordingly; and
2. Add a decision point for Council consideration to the 2023-2027 Financial Plan deliberations to increase the annual funding amount for the ‘Other Grant’ stream.
 - **Advantages:** This would allow the CatNap Society to continue providing their services to the community, and would allow for the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) program to continue, as the CatNap Society has outlined that the SPCA is currently not able to offer the ‘low-income spay/neuter program’.
 - An ongoing increase in the amounts of ‘Other Grants’ budget could give the CatNap Society the opportunity to apply for smaller amounts of grant funding in future years.
 - **Disadvantages:** The Other Grants budget for 2023-2027 would increase each year, which would have an impact on the operating budget and property tax rates.
 - An increase in the Other Grants budget could result in additional other grant applications and increases for funding, and unfortunately the City of Nanaimo does not have the financial resources to support them all.
 - **Financial Implications:** As outlined above, \$2,000 of the remaining operating budget would be used, in addition to \$13,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund to fund the \$15,000 one-time grant request. The ongoing increase in the Other Grants line item would need to be funded by general revenues (property taxes).

2. That Council:

1. Award an Other Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2022 calendar year to the CatNap Society, with funding of \$2,000 from the existing Other Grants budget, and \$13,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and that the 2022-2026 Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

- **Advantages:** This would allow the CatNap Society to continue providing their services to the community, and would allow for the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) program to continue, as the CatNap Society has outlined that the SPCA is currently not able to offer the 'low-income spay/neuter program'.
- **Disadvantages:** There is not enough existing operating budget to cover the request from CatNap, so Council would need to fund it through the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund. This would reduce the available balance in that reserve that is available for other projects.
- **Financial Implications:** As outlined above, \$2,000 of the Other Grant would be funded from the existing Other Grants budget, while the other \$13,000 would have to be funded from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

3. Deny an Other Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2022 calendar year to the CatNap Society

- **Advantages:** There would be no costs incurred for 2022 or into the future.
- **Disadvantages:** This could put the CatNap Society in a position where they are no longer able to continue operating their programs, particularly the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) program. This could have direct implications for the City of Nanaimo's Animal Control operations and the Pound & Adoption Centre.
 - The report from Neilson Strategies outlined that "the feral cat population in Nanaimo is cared for and controlled almost entirely by the volunteer-based Cat Nap Society. The agency's TNR program is widely acknowledged among animal welfare and control partners as being an effective and important community service."
- **Financial Implications:** If the Other Grant request is denied, the remaining 'Other Grants' budget of \$2,000 would remain unexpended, and \$13,000 would not need to be funded from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

4. That Council provide alternative direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- CatNap (Cats Needing Aid and Protection) Society has applied for an Other Grant for \$15,000, and the application meets the criteria for grant approval
- The Society is volunteer-based and has been assisting with the feral, semi-feral, and abandoned cat population in the community for over 22 years without any City funding
- Further to a review completed by Neilson Strategies in 2019 to review animal control services, one of the recommendations was to provide some form of financial support to the CatNap Society so that they are able to sustain operations

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A – Grants Policy and Guidelines

ATTACHMENT B – Application from CatNap Society |

Submitted by:

Jamie Slater
Manager, Revenue Services |

Concurrence by:

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance |