

DATE OF MEETING MARCH 20, 2024

AUTHORED BY JAMIE SLATER, MANAGER, FINANCIAL SERVICES & SPECIAL PROJECTS

SUBJECT Other Grant Request from Nanaimo Science & Sustainability Society

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present the 'Other Grant' application received from the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society for consideration at the Finance and Audit Committee.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to award an 'In-Kind' facility rental 'Other Grant' to the Nanaimo Science & Sustainability Society to cover the costs of up to 105 hours for the use of outdoor City Park spaces.

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo runs an 'Other Grants' program, which includes the following kinds of funding:

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

The criteria for awarding an 'Other Grant' includes:

- Large number of volunteers
- Registered non-profit society
- Sound financial and administrative management
- Demonstrated financial need
- Accessible to a large portion of the community
- Broad base of support
- Other source(s) of financial support
- Must be local in focus and comply with the City of Nanaimo bylaws and policies

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

The Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society applied for in-kind funding of \$5,000 for the rental of various City parks including Bowen Park, Colliery Dam Park, and Neck Point Park. The application is attached to this report as ATTACHMENT B. |

DISCUSSION

The Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society aims to inspire children to become interested in science and sustainability through community outreach and conducting educational programs. A key element to achieving this goal is their 'Science in the Park' program.

The Society was incorporated in 2010 and has since launched a summer program at Vancouver Island University, Wild Wings for Kids, a mobile science van, and summer outreach programs, among other activities.

Each year, the 'Science in the Park' Outreach Educators develop and deliver science-related activities that take place in local parks, beaches, and other green spaces. This is a drop-in program that is free of charge for children of all ages. The program runs between June and August.

The Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society does run other programs where there are fees charged. It should be noted that the grant request is specifically for the hours for the free 'Science in the Park' program.

The original grant application was for \$5,000, but after discussions with the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society, and reviewing the type of programming that could potentially qualify for grant funding under current City policies, the decision was made to apply for funding for in-kind rental spaces for the free programs that are offered.

Comparable Organizations

There are two other known organizations that offer similar programs:

- Nature Nanaimo: Offers some public programs, but at this time there is nothing similar to the free 'Science in the Park' program scheduled for the summer months. Most activities are geared towards members of the club.
- Morrell Sanctuary: Offers summer camps for children aged 5 to 9 years old. The camps are offered at a fee, so would not be eligible for grant funding.

Outside of the In-Kind 'Other Grant' request to the City of Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society is actively pursuing other grants and additional funding from other sources to supplement the wages of the staff running the program and to provide additional Nature Guides for Science in the Park.

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OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council:

Award an 'In-Kind' Facility Rental 'Other Grant' to the Nanaimo Science & Sustainability Society to cover the costs of up to 105 hours for the use of outdoor City Park spaces.

Advantages:

- The City would be supporting the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society in hosting the 'Science in the Park' summer program that is free to City of Nanaimo residents.

Disadvantages:

- Allocation of funds to this program would utilize some of the available Other Grants budget, as outlined below.

Financial Considerations:

- The total 2024 budget for \$7,000 for 'Other Grants' is still available as there have been no requests received to date.
- Using currently enacted rates, the value of the 105 hours of in-kind rentals would be approximately \$2,650.
- The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department will be proposing rate adjustments for outdoor park spaces at the 2024-MAR-20 Finance and Audit Committee meeting, which is the same meeting that this grant request is going to.
- Using proposed new rates for outdoor park spaces, the value of the 105 hours of in-kind rentals would be approximately \$900.

2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council deny an 'In-Kind Other Grant to the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society.

Advantages

- More funding would be available in the Other Grants budget for local organizations.

Disadvantages:

- The City would not be supporting the hosting of the free programs provided by the Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society and the organization may not be able to offer as many free programs due to the cost of running them. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society has applied for an 'In-Kind facility rental 'Other Grant' to assist with the costs of renting outdoor park space at City parks to host the Science in the Park summer camps that are free of charge.
- The application meets the criteria for an 'Other Grant' and there is \$7,000 of funding available in this program for 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Grants Policy and Guidelines

ATTACHMENT B: Other Grant Application – Nanaimo Science and Sustainability Society |

Submitted by:

Jamie Slater
Manager, Financial Services & Special Projects

Concurrence by:

Wendy Fulla
Director, Finance |