



Minutes

Village of Tahsis

Meeting	Committee of the Whole
Date	Tuesday April 21, 2020
Time	1:02 p.m.
Place	Municipal Hall - Council Chambers and by electronic means

Present	Mayor Martin Davis	
	Councillor Bill Elder	
	Councillor Sarah Fowler	
	Councillor Lynda Llewellyn	by phone
	Councillor Cheryl Northcott	by phone

Staff	Mark Tatchell, Chief Administrative Officer	
	Deb Bodnar, Director of Finance	
	Janet StDenis, Finance and Corporate Services Manager	by phone

Public	2 members of public	by phone
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Call to Order

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
Mayor Davis acknowledged and respected that Council is meeting upon Mowachaht/ Muchalaht territory

Introduction of Late Items

None.

Approval of the Agenda

Fowler: COW 040/2020

THAT the Agenda for the April 21, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

Business Arising	1	EOC (Emergency Operations Centre) Update
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The CAO provided an update on the Village's COVID-19 related issues. Updates were provided on the supply of hand sanitizer and PPE's and on the status of the SRD Delivery Program for the Community Cupboard, daily sit-reps to EMBC, operational guidelines for solid waste, the Village's building sanitization program and the Village's Business Continuity Plan.

Changes were made at the provincial government level to provide property tax relief to businesses and to help local governments with cash flow issues due to associated decline in property tax revenue. A discussion on the revenue and cash flow implications of these changes followed.

This was followed by a discussion on the property tax rate % increase scenarios for 2020.

Staff were directed to provide Council with an estimate of savings related to COVID-19 and the State of Provincial Emergency.

Fowler : COW 041/2020

THAT this information be received.

CARRIED

2 Grant-in-Aid policy discussion

There was a discussion on the Grant-in-Aid policy and the pros and cons of the different options presented in the staff report.

Fowler : COW 042/2020

THAT this information be received for discussion.

CARRIED

Fowler : COW 043/2020

THAT the Fees and Charges Bylaw be amended to exempt community groups (definition to be clarified) from paying the rental costs associated with using the Tahsis Recreation Centre.

CARRIED

1"no" vote
registered
Councillor
Elder

Adjournment

Fowler : COW 044/2020

THAT the meeting adjourn at 2:47 p.m.

CARRIED

Certified correct this
5th Day of May, 2020



Corporate Officer

VILLAGE OF TAHSIS

Report to Council

To: Mayor and Council
From: Mark Tatchell, CAO
Date: April 15, 2020
Re: Grant-in-Aid Policy Review - **updated**

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

For Information.

Updated with 2019 estimated revenue loss from Grants-in-Aid.

BACKGROUND:

The *Local Government Act* (s. 271) contemplates local governments providing “assistance for the purpose of benefiting the community or any aspect of the community”. Most BC local governments provide financial grants to community-based organizations to support projects or special activities that benefit their respective communities. The common practice among local governments is to receive grant applications once per year and award financial grants to deserving community organizations following adoption of the local government’s financial plan bylaw.

In 2019, Council received and considered nine (9) grant-in-aid applications. Of these, eight (8) requested use of the Recreation Centre and/or its equipment and furniture at no cost. Only three (3) of the nine (9) applications were not approved by Council. One of the unapproved applications requested financial assistance.

In 2019 the following groups/events approved by Council were:

- Junior Canadian Rangers (free use of gym)
- Tahsis Salmon Enhancement Derby (free use of Recreation Centre, equipment and furniture)
- Culture Days (free use of gym)
- Knights of Columbus (Christmas Hampers) (free use of gym)
- Captain Meares PAC Christmas Bazaar (free use of Rec Centre tables)
- Tahsis Community Spirit (Community Christmas Dinner) (free use of Recreation Centre, equipment and furniture)

The Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 594, 2017 establishes the room rental rate for the Recreation Centre gym (including kitchen facilities) and meeting room. There is no authority in the bylaw for Council to permit the use of the facility by a group (or individual) at no cost, so it is not recommended that Council continue this practice. Also, by permitting the use of the facility without charging the renter the requisite fee, the Village creates an account receivable that goes unpaid. These unpaid fees are a debt owed to the Village which should be recorded on our balance sheet. (Council is reminded that the Fees and Charges Bylaw establishes a low fee [\$5/hour] for renting any Tahsis Recreation Centre room by a community organization. The regular fee is \$40/hour.)

The table below notes the estimated number of hours of facility and equipment use by each community group and the revenue loss based on the \$5.00/hour fee.

Organization	Estimated # of Hours	Revenue Loss/Subsidy
Junior Canadian Rangers	160	\$800
Tahsis Salmon Enhancement Derby	48	\$240
Culture Days	24	\$120
Knights of Columbus	12	\$60
Captain Meares PAC	24	\$120
Tahsis Community Spirit	12	\$60
		\$1,400

Moreover, the Village has not complied with s. 24 of the *Community Charter* which requires Council to give public notice of its intention to provide assistance to persons or organizations.

The bottom line is that there were legal and financial (accounting) issues with the recently rescinded Grant-in-Aid policy

DISCUSSION:

Based on the 2019 decisions, Council generally supports offering the Recreation Centre and its equipment and furniture available at no cost to local community groups. Legally, this can be done in one of two ways.

- Option 1) Amend the Fees and Charges Bylaw to exempt community groups from paying the rental costs associated with using the Tahsis Recreation Centre; or
- Option 2) Amend the Grant-in-Aid policy to establish eligibility and funding criteria for community groups seeking an annual financial grant which could be used to offset Recreation Centre rental charges or other operating costs.

Option 1

Pros:

- Simplifies the process for community groups seeking free use of the Recreation Centre, equipment and furniture
- Consistent with Council's authority to set fees and charges by way of a bylaw.
- Stops the misuse of the term "Grant-in-Aid" (providing free use of a facility is not generally seen as a Grant-in-Aid).

Cons:

- May be difficult to draft the bylaw to capture the various community groups which Council might wish to exempt from paying the Recreation Centre fees.
- May require staff to exercise broad discretion when assessing whether a community group meets the bylaw criteria for fee exemption. (Section 25 of the Community Charter expressly prohibits a council from granting a benefit or other form of assistance to a business including an exemption from a fee. So distinguishing community organizations from businesses is important.)
- The Fees and Charges bylaw, as it is, sets a low fee (\$5/hour) for community organizations wishing to rent any of the Rec Centre rooms, including the gym.

Option 2

Pros:

- Establishes a once/year application process and decision for community groups seeking a grant-in-aid for their operations.
- Consistent with the practice of other local governments.
- Requires community organizations to prepare more detailed applications and budgets and could also include a reporting requirement.
- The grant can be used to offset the cost of renting the Tahsis Recreation Centre and solves the unpaid debt concern described above.

Cons:

- Creates a new budget spend item
- The application process might be too demanding for some community organizations
- Does not accommodate events which might arise during the year, past the application deadline, e.g., Tahsis Community Spirit.

POLICY/LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Community Charter, SBC 2003, Ch. 36
2. Local Government Act, RSBC 2015, Ch. 1
3. Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 594, 2017 (as amended)
4. Grant-in-Aid Policy #2007

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- If Council chooses a version of Option #2, Council would need to consider a budget for Grant-in-Aid funding.
- There is an operating cost whenever Village facilities are used. If the users do not pay a fee to cover all or some of those costs, then those costs are covered by the Village's other sources of revenue, including property taxes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Yes.

GOVERNANCE

Review policies and bylaws and update as necessary

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendation.

Respectfully submitted:



Mark Tatchell, CAO

