REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: July 8, 2024

TITLE: CP-1056-24 - Civic Grant Program Policy

DIVISION: Community and Protective Services

SUMMARY:

To solicit feedback from Council on the proposed Civic Grant Program Policy.

PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion is not required.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The City of Spruce Grove recognizes that community development is a shared responsibility of government, the private sector, non-profit organizations, community groups and individuals, and grant funding can play an important role in supporting those enhancing community. The Civic Grant Program Policy demonstrates Council's commitment to working with community organizations to support activities and services that support building a vibrant, inclusive, equitable, and accessible community.

There has been increased pressures on grant allocations, a need for clarity and accountability, and agility for mid-year allocations. Currently there are multiple avenues in which the City provides grant monies including through agreement/legislation, base budget/historical, public submissions, "one-offs", business cases, and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).

Upon completion of a jurisdictional scan the following was found:
- Many other grant policies / programs provide "per capita" funding.
- Many communities commenting on increased requests / demands for funding.
- Apples to apples is very tough to measure and analyze.

- Very difficult to ascertain from jurisdictional scan the nuances for treatment of base budget or "status quo" versus those that are part of the annual grant allocation.
- Most have some ability to provide micro grants outside of a normal budget or annual grant allocation cycle.

There are some challenges as well:
- How to apply consistent principles to historical versus new?
- How does one potentially move from annual process / allocation to base budget and then become historical?
- Is the Corporate Plan "pot" for public submissions enough? What happens when there are multi-year grants which then diminishes the current year allocation?
- What happens if there is leftover monies in a particular year?
- Who recommends and who approves?

Concept #1
Operational "promotional" items or departmental operating (i.e. Corporate Office, FCSS, Economic Development) will remain outside of policy.

Concept #2
Keep any legislated allocations (i.e. library) or other contractual agreements (i.e. RCMP, TLC) outside of policy and allow for the agreement or legislation to dictate.

Concept #3
Historical or "base budget" allocations would be recognized but exempted from new policy.

Concept #4
Grant policy would enhance the existing public submission process and any new or existing public submissions would be subject to new policy.

Concept #5
Introduction of Micro-Grant component

The following provides a summary / highlights of the proposed Draft Policy:
- Many policy components consistent with jurisdictional scan (i.e. insurance, non-profit, general eligibility, agreements, reporting, etc.).
- There are two main categories (Community and Micro-grants) as part of the overall scope.
- Funding is not detailed in the policy but rather set as part of the annual Corporate Plan.
- Process identified for how a recipient could possibly move from the grant allocation to base budget allocation.
- Disclosure requirement for other applications or funding from the City.
- Micro-grants split into six month intervals to ensure fair distribution.
- Requirement for minimum commitment on Community Grants.

- Exclusions consistent with proposed "concepts".
- Recommendations made by the proposed Community Service Advisory Committee (CSAC) to Council for Community Grants and approval by CSAC for Micro-grants (with Administrative and Subject Matter Experts support).
- Rescission of Policy 3,011 and 8,022.

Next Steps
- Feedback from Council - July 8
- Updated policy for Council approval - August 26
    - Communications Plan to be included as part of the August 26 approval
- Community Services Advisory Committee Bylaw - Third Reading
    - Third Reading August 26 for alignment
- 2024 will follow previous "public budget submission" process
- Corporate Plan consideration of additional funding (November)
- Fully implemented 2025

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:
Feedback from Council to be incorporated in draft policy and brought back for approval.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:
Several internal departments have been engaged on the draft policy.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:
A communications plan will be developed with highlights presented to Council as part of the August 26, 2024 meeting. If/when the policy is approved, communications will be provided to the public in general; however, also from a community development perspective through the City to various community partners.

IMPACTS:
The following should be realized with the approval and implementation of the policy:
- Increased transparency and consistency to applicants and recipients.
- Increased accountability and reporting which aligns with Council's goal of fiscal responsibility and transparency.
- Clear process for Administration and Council to point individuals/groups to, which will minimize attempts to circumvent approval processes. This promotes greater fairness and consistency.
- Increased engagement and input through the CSAC's involvement in the process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Any legislated or legal agreements / contracts would remain and process for increases are either through business cases or overall Corporate Plan approval.

Historical or base budget allocations would remain and the process for increases would be business cases and approval by Council as part of Corporate Plan approval.

Current "pot" for public submissions is $150,000 annually; however, multi-year initiatives and approvals impact future years. It is being recommended as part of the Corporate Plan to add an additional $25,000 to the public submission / grant funding allocation and $15,000 to the new micro-grant program. This is new funding (total $40,000) that is not currently a part of the City's overall base budget.

While it may be unlikely, any unused funds from public submissions or micro-grant would be set aside for future pressures.