

Staff Report



To	General Committee
Subject	Follow-up to the Recreation and Sport Community Grant Adjudication Process
Date	April 16, 2025
Ward	All
From	K. Datema, Director of Recreation and Culture Services
Executive Member Approval	J. Schmidt, GM Community and Corporate Services
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Report #	REC002-25

Recommendation(s):

1. That staff be directed to implement permanent changes to the Recreation and Sport Community Grant Adjudication Panel based on the direction of Council motion 24-G-145 and on the success of the interim solution piloted in 2024. (REC002-25)
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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide members of Council with additional information in response to pending item #P21/24 and recommend adopting the composition of the 2024 Recreation & Sport Community Grant adjudication panel as a permanent change.

That in consideration of further changes to the structure of the adjudication process for the Recreation and Sport Community Grant in 2025, staff in the Recreation and Culture Services Department examine grant processes and models of other municipalities including the City of Guelph and report back to General Committee. (REC001- 24) (File: R06)

Key Findings:

In consideration of changes to the structure of the adjudication process for the Recreation and Sport Community Grant in 2025, staff have determined that our current approach to grant adjudication is aligned with similar municipal grant programs. The Recreation and Culture Department have examined grant processes and models of other municipalities, including that of the City of Guelph.

Prior to 2024, the City of Barrie Community Recreation and Sport Grant was historically adjudicated by a panel comprised of five interdepartmental staff members. This approach ensured a consistent and internal review process; however, it also limited community

involvement in the decision-making process. To enhance transparency, community engagement, and inclusiveness the adjudication panel transitioned to a hybrid model of City staff and a committee of community members in 2024, on an interim basis. The 2024 grant adjudication panel composition included the Director of Recreation and Culture Services, a representative from Economic and Creative Development, a representative from Tourism Barrie, and two (2) community members.

The transition to a hybrid model increased the credibility and fairness of the grant adjudication process. Based on feedback provided to the Grant Administrator from the 2024 adjudication panel and the alignment with other municipal grant programs, staff are confident that maintaining a hybrid approach serves the grant applicants effectively and transparently.

These changes are expected to take permanent effect for the 2025 grant application window.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation.

Alternatives:

The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 – General Committee could choose to revert back to the 2023 composition of the Recreation & Sport Community Grant adjudication panel: five (5) city staff and no community members. This alternative is available. This alternative is not recommended as it reverses the progress staff have made in addressing the transparency and community engagement elements noted above.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Affordable Place to Live		
Community Safety		
Thriving Community	x	The overall success of the grant and its adjudication helps create and foster programs and provides opportunities to support community wellness through the funding provided to successful applicants. As community partners expand their programs, this maximizes residents' access to recreation opportunities.
Infrastructure Investments		
Responsible Governance	x	Using low-cost solutions in lieu of staff members ensures that we help support community needs while keeping tax increases low. Enlisting the assistance of community adjudicators ensures transparency during the adjudication and grant awarding process.

Additional Background Information and Analysis:

Staff surveyed several Southern Ontario municipalities that support their communities with in-house grant funding. The administrative support and oversight of these programs and the composition of each adjudication panel varies widely between municipalities. In many cases, municipalities have dedicated teams and resources for the sole purpose of administering one overarching municipal grant or several smaller grants, each with their own unique evaluation criteria.

Staff determined that several different models of adjudication panel compositions are used amongst our peers:

- **Staff Model:** Mainly comprised of staff members from cross-functional teams with similar lines of business.
- **Hybrid Model:** A blended approach, consisting of both staff and community members (and/or council representation).
- **Community Model:** Exclusively comprised of community members. In some cases, municipalities may compensate adjudicators and require them to serve a minimum term to adjudicate on several city grants annually.

Barrie's proposed change aligns with the model in place in similar municipalities that administrate community grants as outlined below, specifically Hamilton and Richmond Hill:

Municipality	Grant Type	Adjudication Panel Composition
Barrie (2023)	Departmental: Recreation & Sport	Staff (interdepartmental)
Barrie (2024)	Departmental: Recreation & Sport	Hybrid
Guelph	Community/City-wide	Community
Hamilton	Community/City-wide	Hybrid
Markham	Sports, Culture & Community Events/Programs	Staff (interdepartmental)
New Tecumseth	Community/City-wide (incl. events and arts/culture/tourism)	3 Staff & 1 Member of Council
Orillia	1. General Grants Program 2. Cultural Festivals & Events Program	Committee of Council (4 members)
Richmond Hill	Community & Cultural Grant	Hybrid
Toronto	Due to the complexity and volume of grants available in Toronto, the Toronto Arts Council administers many of their grants at arms-length.	Community

Guelph establishes a Grant Allocation Working Group on an annual basis, for a term upwards of 8 years. This working group is comprised of a maximum of 10 community members. This group meets 8 to 10 times annually to review batches of various grant applications throughout the year. Applications are screened for eligibility by Community Investment staff and provided to the Grant Allocation Working Group for review. The Grant

Allocation Working Group reviews each eligible application using the ‘application assessment criteria listed in the respective grant policy.

In review of the model above, Guelph has a dedicated team of staff within their Community Investment portfolio for city-wide grants. Based on the smaller scope of the Barrie Recreation and Sport Community Grant, city staff are not able to recommend this model without considerable staff and resource investments.

To enhance community engagement, equity, and inclusiveness, the grant administrator will recruit the community member component of the adjudication panel based on applicant’s subject matter expertise and their ability to demonstrate competencies in the following key areas:

- Experience in community recreation or sport
- Knowledge of grant management, administration, or adjudication
- Commitment to fairness, equality, diversity, and transparency
- Complex decision-making skills
- Financial experience
- Community leadership
- Understanding of community needs

A copy of the grant adjudication panel application form is attached as appendix B.

Consultation and Engagement:

No public consultation required in relation to this staff report.

Environmental and Climate Change Impact Matters:

There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

Appendix:

Appendix A: 2025 Recreation and Sport Community Grant Guidelines

Appendix B: 2025 Rec and Sport Grant Adjudication Panel Application Form

Report Author:

C. Gillard – Manager, Recreation & Culture Business Services

File #:

Not Applicable

Pending #:

P21/24