

Appendix 2 - Responses from Welland Council requested in report CS-2024-05

Please Note: Not all Councillors responded to all questions. This is a complete list of all Councillor responses received through the survey following the March 26, 2024 General Committee meeting.

Question 1:

Should the granting of organizations automatically occur each year? Is this attainable for all organizations? Should a goal be for organizations to be self-sufficient?

Councillor Richard	Dependant on what grants Legacy or Permissive. Legacy grants = Yes - provided they meet the criteria of being determined a Legacy grant (years in successful operation at least 10 Years I would say – providing a positive service to our City to include entertainment of all ages) must fund raise etc. etc. Permissive Grants – NO- Also they must meet all criteria and not be funded by the government with paid staff... The applicants that are completely Govt. funded – with paid staff should be excluded from applying.
Councillor McLeod	Self-sufficient is important
Councillor Speck	to bring back the requirement that if greater than 30% of funding for the organization comes from other levels of government the municipality will not contribute.
Councillor Van Vliet	I have always felt that organizations should be self sufficient. I will make an exception where the organization is working on housing, feeding and clothing residents who have fallen on hard times.
Councillor DiMarco	(long time running traditional organizations eg: Rose Festival for one, and there are others, are definitely funded, and up until the past few yrs there was NEVER a problem with such. I would expect that a financial statement be submitted and then if there are any questions, which there shouldn't be, then we discuss for the following year, and this goes for all groups. Groups that are new(er) to our city should be at councilors discretion and not automatic seeing some will be small in regards to a particular group/organization, they can NOT expect the same as some others when first requesting ...possibly minimal
Councillor Grimaldi	No, automatic granting of organizations each year can lead to dependency and lessens their attainability and sustainability of their organization. Even nonprofits need to have their own financial plan for existence and stability for their volunteers and their organizations viability. Granting should not be considered their main source of income, and their goal should always be to become self-sufficient.

<p>Councillor Setaram</p>	<p>There should be an option for multi-year (2 or 3) funding to support the planning and delivery of some activities. For example, grants for food / shelter programs / children’s mental health This could be extended to others depending on their activity to allow for multi-year contracts. Organization should be striving to be self-sufficient. If the majority of the funding is coming from COW then it begs the question why the city doesn’t adopt this event / activity as a signature program and have a steering committee. This would hopefully allow for direct and indirect cost-savings. I’m also asked about how other groups / organizations can apply to be a legacy group so if this category exists, then we need a way for people to apply and set criteria. There’s also a question of when a council rep needs to be appointed sit on the board / organizing team of an external organization? Do all funded groups require a council appointed representative? When and why is it needed? If the grant is of a certain value over 50K, should there be an appointed staff person joining meetings or involved in some other way.</p>
	<p>I think there should be streams of funding – and some possibility for a smaller grant for new initiatives. There should be requirements that the event has to take place in Welland but the organization doesn’t have to be based in Welland.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Festivals – should include a definition of a festival. Is this one weekend, multiple days in a month? 2) Arts and Culture initiatives 3) Organizations working with vulnerable groups – depending on the level of grant, we might want some things in return like we would with the YMCA, or other more corporate partners. <p>Some of the current legacy grants – should these be moved to partnership agreements like the YMCA? Thinking of organizations like Pathstone, etc This is more like institutional funding rather than time bound program / initiative.</p>

Question 2:

Do the values in the City's strategic plan matter when determining which grant applications are approved? What other criteria should be used to evaluate community grant applications?

Councillor Richard	<p>Yes.. Our values are important and do matter, with health and well being certainly a very large part of our plan as well. Criteria – should be enforced with fund raising and internal operation of their group considered such as other funding – Volunteers only and surely Residents of Welland, (grants are funded by our City taxpayers and should benefit Welland only!</p> <p>Permissive grants should never include private run sports or entertainment groups.</p> <p>These are private businesses which we cannot support. In fairness it opens the doors for all private business. Similar to complete groups completely funded by the Government with paid staff. There should not be Niagara area groups considered –especially wanting funding when they do not provide the service to Welland exclusively or receiving funding from many other areas as well.</p>
Councillor McLeod	<p>Initiatives supported should align with Community priorities and/or Strategic Priorities</p>
Councillor Speck	<p>no more than 3 years of permissive Grant funding. Specifically I wish to drop the word consecutive.</p>
Councillor DiMarco	<p>No, as mentioned above a newer group which I explained above</p>
Councillor Grimaldi	<p>Strategic plan values do matter to a degree but the benefit it provides to our citizens including our most vulnerable citizens should be prioritized equally.</p> <p>Other criteris Could Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How much effort has been put into fund raisingEffort into their recruitment plan for volunteersTheir goal for becoming self-sufficient (timeline)A maximum limit of grant \$A maximum limit of grant application requests (years)
Councillor Setaram	<p>Leadership stability is critical, are there paid staff? What is the turnover in the board of directors? I believe it is St. Catharines that has a requirement for stability. There doesn't have to be a staff person but there does need to be proper controls.</p> <p>The organizing team / board of director / key staff should be identified. Organization should share a multi-year budget and a fundraising plan.</p>

Question 3:

What type of information must be provided in a community grant funding application, and should there be any post-community grant funding requirements?

Councillor Richard	The application must include all pertinent information in regards to the Group such as questions of : If a Volunteer group – any paid staff - fund raising attempts- other sources of monies/funded - expected or received- informed they will have to present their financial record- non profit organizations only – Reserve funds brought forth- VERY Important - Similar to grant applications on line – have a cut off date set up - that will simply not accept any late entries after the midnight deadline . This eliminates what we have experienced over many years. No financials received – no approval (unless a detailed reasoning of why it could
Councillor McLeod	Information collected should be clear as to who is involved, specifically what they are proposing, how funding will be distributed or returned. It needs to be standardized and formalized. It should mirror procurement policy requirements. I do not know what ‘Post community grant funding requirements” means.
Councillor Speck	for staff to provide on the City website the full Matrix of the all applicants and where they were successful or where they failed to meet policy. This will be in grid format as it has been in our agenda in the past and will help improve transparency
Councillor DiMarco	Yes, and possibly for a newer group, prior to and post event financials and possibly for all
Councillor Grimaldi	How long the organization has existed and what steps they have taken to become self-sufficient, amount of fundraising it has done in past years, and the amount of funds and capital the organization has incurred over the years.
Councillor Setaram	There should be additional requirements for organizations seeking funds over 25K. Groups receiving funds should comply in with not for profit and charitable rules and there should be an attestation for this. All organizations awarded grants should be announced publicly with their socials, similar to a press release. There should be post-community grant funding requirements with a simple report on the outcomes and if there were any issues how they will be addressed in the future.

Question 4:

**Reviewing the current practice, how can we better ensure a good governance approach?
Referring to effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and responsible management.**

Councillor Richard	No individual grants given out to private individuals after the process is complete. It is simply unfair to applicants that have been denied to find out others have been receiving funds from the city for events and not even providing financial statements??They can apply the following year and follow the correct process as all others (surely there is more and will be highlighted I am sure once we are able to review of the proposed requirements of the policy.
Councillor McLeod	Current practice review. Its flawed. Start over. Have everything managed through staff.
Councillor Speck	recipients are to provide a brief written report of the results of the program or event or capital project that they received money for.
Councillor DiMarco	(as mentioned above as well, for the past few years certain groups have been unnecessarily treated like never before basically that being, what I would call, a mild form of harassment, and they don't deserve it. <i>Referring to effectiveness</i> (the majority of councilors know what these groups do for our city and they do not need or do they appreciate the city interfering is my guess unless of course something out of the ordinary occurs , <i>transparency</i> (we ask these groups to submit financial statements after an event, continuing that is what the norm has been AND what we could add and if possible a pre-event plan both monetary and sked/outline of sorts of what is being proposed ... but NOT necessarily to change their event ... for the majority of time these people/organizers have the "know how" esp the legacy groups) , <i>accountability</i> , (as mentioned above, they have the "know how" let them perform and if/when we have questions, we ask prior to the following year) <i>and responsible management.</i> (this is what we watch then question after the fact and again prior to the following year event/request seeing there may be new people running the event and/or the group requesting is relatively new)
Councillor Grimaldi	Good governance will depend on council-as-a-whole through professionalism and consensus. Staff and council set the policies unfortunately council overturns the policy. Years back when the permissive grants moved into a decision unit category in the budget process they became a political hot potato. Prior to that council had decided to stay the line on grants and the amount allocated was to lower in following years. Since then, it has become a highly political battle.

Councillor Setaram	<p>Evaluation of the application should be done by an advisory committee. Composition members of the public who are not part of the organizing teams applying for funds, and potentially with no affiliation. 1 to 2 members of council. 1 to 2 staff persons, including someone from Community Services. Advisory committee should be provided with the full application to review similar to other funding review committees. Would be great to have a brochure (or on the grant page of the website) a listing of available services for groups organizing events. And/or setting expectations that when you host X type of event, you will need package A from the city which includes X services for a cost of X. Would like to see information grants sessions (could be mandatory) to help people understand what information is required and how to apply, and timelines. Would also like to see an online portal for documents so that if part of the submission is missing, it isn't accepted.</p>
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Question 5:

Listening to the conversations and insights gathered from questions 1 through 4, should the city be in the granting business?

Councillor Richard	I truly believe the City should definitely be involved with permissive grants. And even, more so with legacy grants . With Permissive grants – it is a way for the city to encourage success and provide a service that perhaps economically our city cannot do- provided these applicants are volunteer based.
Councillor McLeod	City should not be in the grant business, but in the ‘funding business’ of City initiatives through partnerships with organizations. I agree with starting over with a brand new process based on transparency, responsiveness, good governance, clear roles and supports growth of organizations
Councillor Speck	No response provided
Councillor DiMarco	(ABSOLUTELY ... and let these groups, mostly volunteers who have experience of sorts ... and some staff, who work directly (traffic for road closures, wooden barriers for road/pedestrian traffic ... etc) with these groups where for the majority of time work hand in hand with each other without problems, or minimal at best
Councillor Grimaldi	No, it should not as it is right now. There should be a strict policy and a set amount if it is to be continued. It is meant to help organizations not to fund them and it should not directly affect the tax base.
Councillor Setaram	Yes, we just need to find the right processes for COW.

Final Comments

Councillor Richard	<p>The City would not be economically able to organize these events if they had to pay staff as now it is done by Volunteers. . Our City and Business groups benefit from Events happening in our City . Removing these events will only make our residents travel to area cities and towns for entertainment to spend their money instead of keeping it in our own City- supporting our own.(E.g. - gas stations- restaurants – hotels convenience stores and mall etc. etc.) Of course I do agree with Permissive grants it should not be extended over three year , as the purpose is to get them started. I also agree that some of these applicants could join forces possibly –e.g. Food fest and Floatfest with one huge event – sharing of in kind services etc. Criteria should be enforced stronger with accountability of the applicants prior to and after their events.</p> <p>The application can be made far simpler with the elimination of repeating and criteria that only meets our City and resident needs. Money in reserves is another question that needs to be asked as it is quite shocking at times - when they present at council – and the question is asked. This is my responses to the questions</p>
Councillor McLeod	<p>Permissive Grants should be rolled into Community Services budget and managed to deliver community events & community programming by engaging with community groups.</p> <p>Legacy Groups/grants need to be stopped and funding redirected to Community Services to support community priorities. (ie Rose Feastival is not a Community Priority but soaks up a significant amount of the budget).</p>
Councillor Moote	<p>At the meeting they were presenting cheque's for their permissive grants which they do throughout the year and the money is from their Hydro dividend. I also think the grants are selected by a volunteer committee. I would use City staff for this committee to take the politics out of it.</p>
Councillor DiMarco	<p>AND MAY I ADD ... For the past few years and as we all know, we are having trouble getting volunteers to sit on our committees, organizing groups ... etc., LIKE NEVER BEFORE, and it is not a coincidence. Rather than “nickel and dime” these people lets leave them alone of sorts and let them do their jobs ... esp the people who have been involved for years and who have put on events that the people enjoy and who will comment up until the following years event at times AND ONE MORE THING ... the concert series has been damaged AND I HOPE ...not beyond repair. When an uninterested group state their case and basically want no involvement in an event ... leave it at that and continue with what once was a HUGE SUCCESS !!!</p>

Councillor Setaram	<p>I received feedback from community members and there were some interesting points shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Incorporating a mechanism to receive / deal with complaints about misuse / mismanagement of city issued funds, this includes overuse of cash payments without any policies on when cash payments will be issued.b) Support for an advisory committee of mixed representativesc) Comment that groups should charge an admission fee as part of their fundraisingd) Grants should be based on need - mental health / homeless / at riske) Should be community wide and caution around funding religious or political groupsf) Obligation for volunteer organizations to be notify the city if they no longer have members acting in certain leadership positions (i.e, treasurer)g) Documents for review – confirmation of AGM and election of board of directorsh) Consider a cap in funding and require all groups to be registered charities, not for profits, or social enterprise
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