

COMMISSION REPORT

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE
COMMISSION

DATE: 2021 May 04

FROM: DIRECTOR - PARKS, RECREATION &
CULTURAL SERVICES

FILE: 7000-01

**SUBJECT: RECREATION CREDIT – LOW INCOME APPLICATION APPROVAL
FUNDING**

PURPOSE: To request approval to move the financial support to Burnaby Community Services (BCS) for the administration of low income applications from the Executive Committee of Council's Community Grant process to a 3 year Operating Agreement

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission recommend Council authorize the execution of an Operating Agreement commencing in 2021 with Burnaby Community Services for their administration of low income applications for the City of Burnaby's Recreation Credit Program for up to \$30,000 annually, as outlined in this report.
2. THAT approval be given for the expenditure of \$16,555 for 2020 to support the cost of administering low income Recreation Credit application approval process.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Burnaby Community Services for their information.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Since 1996, the City of Burnaby has worked with BCS to administer the verification of low income applications for our Recreation Credit Program. Recreation Credit provides financial support for Burnaby residents to access City recreation programs and services. The evaluation service is required on an ongoing basis and best practices have this service provided independently from the City of Burnaby.

Verification of low income applications includes:

- Intake of application forms and supporting documents for low income individuals, families, seniors and people receiving Long Term Disability or Canada Pension Plan;

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- Review of applications received for accuracy and required supporting documentation (i.e. proof of residency, Notice of Assessment or Child Tax Benefit payment) ;
- Follow up with applicants to obtain missing information;
- Approval of applications that meet the city's criteria;
- Provide city staff with approved applications; and,
- Inform applicants who do not meet the criteria and provide follow up assistance as required.

Financial support to BCS for this work has been provided through the Executive Committee of Council's Community Grant Process. BCS applies twice annually to cover expenses. The initial annual grant request is for fixed expenses including staff salaries, office space, equipment and supplies. This annual fixed amount of \$17,000 has not increased since BCS began supporting the low income applications. The second annual grant request is near the end of the year for variable expenses including printing, copying, postage and any additional staff support dependent on volume of applications received.

In 2020 the Recreation Credit Program was suspended for 2 months when the city's recreation facilities were closed and BCS reduced operations due to Provincial Health Orders related to Covid-19. While the Recreation Credit Program was re-started in conjunction with the re-opening of recreation facilities, fewer applications were received in 2020. This unique situation, along with staff changes at BCS, led to discussions between city and BCS staff.

The city's Recreation Credit Program is well established and it is reasonable to expect that for the foreseeable future there will be a continued need for financial support to some Burnaby residents so they can enhance their health and wellness through recreational activities. Given this, and the length of time BCS has provided low income application verification, it would be more efficient for the city to provide financial support through an Operating Agreement instead of an annual grant process.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

Goal

This recommendation aligns with the Corporate Strategic Plan in the following ways:

A Connected Community

- Enhance social connections throughout Burnaby

An Inclusive Community

- Create opportunities for community to support diversity
- Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome community members
- Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome all members and create a sense of belonging

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A Healthy Community

- Encourage opportunities for healthy living and well-being
- Improve upon and develop programs and services that enable ongoing learning

A Thriving Organization

- Ensure that our core values are reflected in our policies, programs and service delivery
- Foster an environment for teamwork, efficiency and excellence to deliver customer services in alignment with our core values

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that approval be given to move the financial support for Burnaby Community Services work administering the low income applications to a 3 year Operating Agreement with a \$30,000 maximum per year based on approval of actuals commencing in 2021. It is recommended that approval be given to support a reduced amount of \$16,555 for 2020 Recreation Credit approvals completed by Burnaby Community Services. Annual payments will be reviewed and approved based on actual applications processed. The Operating Agreement will be reviewed every three years.



Dave Ellenwood
DIRECTOR – PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

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