



REPORT

To: Rural Budgets Administration Committee

Report Number: FN-RBAC-066

From: Teri Vetter, Chief Financial Officer

Date: March 18, 2021

Subject: Rural Recreational and Cultural Grants-in-Aid – 2021 Eligibility Review

RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee determine which 2021 Recreational and Cultural Grants-in-Aid applications are eligible to be considered for funding under the Recreational and Cultural GIA policy.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee determine which grant applications, if any, will be provided a grant through alternative funding options; further,

That the Committee identify the appropriate funding source should any such grant contributions be approved.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee determine if the Rural Recreational and Cultural Grants-in-Aid allocation meetings will be held in 2021.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Grant contributions from Rural Recreational and Cultural Grants-in-Aid (GIA) are intended to assist rural not-for-profit organizations who provide recreation, arts, sports, and/or social activities to communities within the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). To be eligible for grant funding all applicants must be rural organizations located within the boundaries of Electoral Area B, C, E or Sub-Regional; however, organizations who are located or operate within a municipality may apply if they maintain a rural membership of at least 75%. Grant funding may be used to support capital improvements and insurance in Electoral Area B and C; whereas in Electoral Area E and Sub-Regional grant funding may also be used to support general operating costs. This year, a total of 41 grant applications were received and the combined total amount requested is \$1,136,590.80. Below is a chart that breaks down the numbers by each Electoral Area.

Electoral Area	Number of Applications	Amount Requested	2021 Budget Commitment
Area B	14	\$409,635.08	\$178,356
Area C	3	\$91,630	\$51,716
Area E	9	\$424,321.08	\$107,463
Sub-Regional	15	\$247,004.64	\$200,000
Totals	41	\$1,136,590.80	\$537,535.00

Recommendations 1 and 2:

Information in this report provides the Rural Budgets Administration Committee (RBAC) with a general idea of what is being requested from all of the 2021 GIA applicants. Staff have reviewed each application to ensure all supporting documents have been included, identified potential alternate funding options and provided assessment notes to assist RBAC with determining the eligibility and merit of the applicants.

A Summary of Applications has been compiled to outline each organization's not-for-profit status, financial request and project details for each funding area. A new column has been added to each of the Summary of Applications sheets to illustrate the number of applicants that have declared they have an amount remaining from their 2020 GIA contribution. In 2020 all GIA was paid out in full rather than through claim reimbursement. The annual reports from those applicants outline why not all of the grant was utilized and how the applicant intends to spend the remaining amount in 2021.

The Summary of Applications for Electoral Area E and Sub-Regional include a column for Director's Allocation. In prior years, it has been the choice of the Electoral Area Directors to pre-allocate a percentage of the total amount requested from each eligible applicant prior to the allocation meetings. The amounts are calculated using the following principles:

- 75% of the total amount requested is pre-allocated when the amount requested is \$10,000 or less; or
- 50% of the total amount requested is pre-allocated when the amount requested is greater than \$10,000.

All Electoral Area Directors have been sent an electronic copy of the all of the grant applications pertaining to their specific Electoral Area prior to the March 18, 2021 RBAC meeting.

Applications of Note:

1. High School Rodeo of BC (HSRBC) has been highlighted and included as a funding request to each area. HSRBC is a new applicant this year and has a rural membership of 80% inclusive of all the Electoral Areas. Funding is being requested in the amount of \$18,000 to support operational costs to host six rodeo events taking place in the Peace Region in 2021. Section 4.2 of the attached GIA policy, provides the Electoral Directors discretion to consider funding one applicant from all areas when the following applies:
 - e) At the discretion of the Electoral Area Directors, organizations may apply to more than one funding area if their recreation and/or community association services are provided to residents in more than one community and that their membership is reflective of this.

In Electoral Area B and C operating costs are not eligible under GIA. This request is to be used to support hosting events and could be considered operating cost. An option for Electoral Area B and C could be to utilize Fair Share if the Directors wish to fund the request. In Area E and Sub-Regional operating costs are eligible and GIA could be used to support this request. In prior years, HSRBC has received grant funding to host rodeo events Grants to Community Organizations.

2. Prespatou Planning Committee Society is a new applicant and is requesting support of \$100,000 for a community trail project. This project has been previously supported using Regional Recreational Trails Grants-in-Aid program and the applicant was allocated \$38,561.25 in 2019. None of the grant funding has been spent to date. The organization has been working in collaboration with Community Services staff to get this project off the ground working toward getting permits in place and right of ways sorted. An alternate funding option for consideration could be Community Works Gas Tax – Local Roads, Bridges and Active Transportation which can be used for cycling lanes, paths, sidewalks and hiking trails. On March 12, 2020 the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED

That a permit to construct a trail in the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure right-of-way be applied for on behalf of the Prespatou Planning Committee Society (PPCS) for the Prespatou Trail; further, that a Trail Maintenance Agreement between the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) and the PPCS be drafted for signature prior to the Society beginning trail construction and operations to include any conditions required by either the PRRD or Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

3. Charlie Lake Conservation Society is a new applicant and is requesting funding in the amount of \$9,900 to carry out a monthly algae sampling study. Although this project is not of an arts, recreation, sport or social nature, the society itself is eligible. In Electoral Area C funding from GIA cannot be used to support operational expenses and it will need to be determined if this project is capital in nature. An alternate funding option for this project could be Fair Share.
4. Boreal Centre for Sustainability is requesting a grant in the amount of \$18,921 to assist with a retrofit project of their greenhouse. This organization applied for GIA funding in 2019; however was deemed not eligible as it is not registered in BC as a not for profit society. The organization holds the status as a federally incorporated not for profit. The GIA policy indicates a society must be registered as a not-for-profit but it does not stipulate within BC.

Recommendation 3:

The annual allocation meetings are a key part of the approval process for GIA funds. These meetings are unique in that they bring together each of the eligible applicants and the Electoral Area Directors to distribute grant funding by consensus using a collective and interactive process. They create an opportunity for organizations to work alongside one another to collaborate on how their communities will benefit and support a proactive and cooperative approach to the allocation of grant funds. As demonstrated in the table above, this year the total application amount requested far exceeds the amount of the budgeted commitment for each of the funding areas. When this is the case, the approval process as outlined in Section 4.5 of the attached GIA policy, states:

- d) If the total application amount exceeds the annual budget, then the annual budget will be distributed based on consensus of the eligible recreational and community organizations and the Electoral Area Director(s) in attendance at the adjudication meetings.

If it is determined meetings will be held in 2021, it will require that three meetings be scheduled for the third week of April, one in the north peace for both Electoral Area B and C, one in the west peace for

Electoral Area E and one in the south peace for Sub-Regional. A location and venue will need to be identified and booked. It will need to be determined how to safely host in-person meetings in a manner that protects everyone in attendance, supports the PRRD COVID Recovery Plan and meets the guidelines set out in the provincial Public Health Order. In accordance with the policy, it is required at least one member from each applicant organization be in attendance at the meetings in order to be considered for a grant allocation. Based on the current number of potentially eligible applicants, each area meeting will require the following number of people to be present at the in-person meeting:

- Area B and C – 21 Attendees (17 applicant representatives, 2 Electoral Area Directors, 2 PRRD Staff)
- Area E – 12 Attendees (9 applicant representatives, 1 Electoral Area Director, 2 PRRD Staff)
- Sub-Regional – 19 Attendees (15 Applicant representatives, 2 Electoral Area Directors, 2 PRRD staff)

An alternate to in-person meetings could be to host meetings electronically. This option has been used by the PRRD to successfully host some public meetings in recent months; however, RBAC needs to consider if the format and the way in which the meetings are carried out is conducive hosting virtual GIA allocation meetings. Electronic meetings will need to be conducted in a manner that will allow for interactive conversation by participants to negotiate and allocate funds as well as allow for staff to record and balance the allocations. Each participant will need to be sent a copy of the agenda and all attendees will need to be able to successfully access the technology required to connect to the meeting and participate.

A further option to consider could be to have grant allocations determined at the April 15, 2021 RBAC meeting. Each Electoral Area Director will be responsible for determining what amount of funding to allocate from GIA or grant from other funding options based on their review of each of the grant applications and the information provided in the Summary of Applications. This is the process that was used to allocate the 2020 GIA contributions.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

¶ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Each Electoral Area Director budgets an annual commitment for the allocation of Recreational and Cultural GIA. The 2021 amounts to be included as a commitment in Recreation and Cultural Facilities Grant, Function 280(F280) and Sub-Regional Recreation, Function 221 (F221), as part of the 2021 Annual Budget are:

- \$178,356 Electoral Area B (F280)
- \$ 51,716 Electoral Area C (F280)
- \$107,463 Electoral Area E (F280)
- \$200,000 South Peace Sub-Regional (F221)

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

1. Staff will notify each grant applicant of the Committee's decision regarding the hosting of the 2021 GIA allocation meetings by written correspondence, email and/or by phone and provide details of the Committee's decision.
2. Staff will send written correspondence to applicants whose applications are not eligible to be considered for GIA funding.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None.

Attachments:

1. 2021 Summary of Applications – Area B
2. 2021 Summary of Applications – Area C
3. 2021 Summary of Applications – Area E
4. 2021 Summary of Applications – Sub-Regional
5. Rural Recreational and Cultural GIA Policy 0340-61