

To: Members of City Council

From: Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force

Re: Community and Social Well-Being Reserve

AIM

To seek Council's authorization to carry over the remaining \$49,500 in the 2024 Community and Social Well-Being Reserve.

BACKGROUND

At the March 16, 2023 Council meeting, Woodstock City Council established a Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force along with a Community Social Well-Being Reserve with an annual budget of \$150,000, funded from the OLG Slot Reserve Fund. The Task Force is responsible for considering proposals for the use of the funds and making recommendations to Council.

The resolution which created the Task Force directed that funding requests be considered for proposals to support new or expanded initiatives that accelerate solutions in support of our most vulnerable and marginalized populations. The resolution also directed that priority for 2023 funding be given to agency services to lead and support a coordinated encampment response program. Through the work of the Mayor's Task Force, a City-led Encampment Response Core Team came together to proactively monitor and attempt to address encampments within the City. The Core Team includes representatives from the City Parks Department, Bylaw Enforcement, Public Works, Communications, Fire Department, Woodstock Police Service, Oxford County Human Services, Operation Sharing, SWPH, OCCHC, and UTRCA. The Core Team meets regularly to review active encampments.

Council approved funding from the 2023 Community and Social Well-Being Reserve as follows:

1. Parks Department - \$50,000 for sanitation items and services for encampments
2. Operation Sharing - \$50,000 for additional security services at shelter locations
3. OCCHC Mobile Health Outreach Bus - \$7,500 for daily living supplies and primary care medical supplies for encampment residents
4. Salvation Army Food Bank - \$7,500 to purchase food
5. Ingamo Homes - \$5,000 to provide food for clients
6. Operation Sharing - \$30,000 for a mobile warming centre

At the September 5, 2024 Council meeting, Council approved the allocation of \$100,000 from the 2024 Reserve to encampment clean-up. Further, at the November 7, 2024 Council meeting, Council approved a \$500 grant to the Woodstock Baptist Cemetery to provide support to clean up an encampment on the cemetery property. \$49,500 remains available for disbursement in 2024.

COMMENTS

While the Task Force maintains its focus on encampments, much of the related activities are now handled by the Encampment Response Core Team. This Core Team delivers updates to the Task Force at each meeting. Additionally, the Task Force has expanded its focus to include youth services and addressing food insecurity in 2024 and 2025.

Three requests for funding from the remaining 2024 Reserve, totalling \$50,000, have recently been received from community partners that sit on the Task Force. Two of these requests address food insecurity, while the third focuses on at-risk youth. While both youth and food insecurity have been identified as key priorities by the Task Force, traction in these areas has been slow in 2024 and will require additional focus and efforts in 2025. Given the timing of the submissions, the Task Force was unable to meet and review the requests as a group before the final Council meeting of 2024. Therefore, it is recommended that Council approve the carryover of the remaining \$49,500. This will allow for additional information and stakeholder input to be gathered before making funding recommendations to Council on these requests in early 2025. Work will then begin on defining Terms of Reference for the Task Force and creating guidelines for future funding recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Woodstock City Council authorizes the remaining account balance from the Community and Social Well-Being Reserve to be carried over to 2025.

Authored by: Amy Humphries, B. Math, M.P.A., Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Approved by: Jerry Acchione, Mayor