

**MINUTES
FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room # 2
770 Vernon Avenue

Monday, March 10, 2025, at 9 a.m.

Present: Councillor Susan Brice (Chair); Councillor Nathalie Chambers; Councillor Mena Westhaver; Mayor Dean Murdock (joined at 9:14 a.m.)

Regrets: Councillor Zac de Vries;

Staff: Paul Arslan, Director of Finance; Jennifer Lockhart, Senior Manager of Financial Services; Tianna Solares, Senior Manager Recreation (joined at 10:04 a.m. and departed at 10:21 a.m.); Joanne Lum, Grants Analyst; and Tara Judge, Executive Administrative Assistant to the CAO

MINUTES FOR ADOPTION

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and Seconded by Councillor Westhaver: “That the minutes of the Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting held October 28, 2024, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES GRANTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING GRANTS

A report from the Director of Finance dated February 28, 2025, was presented along with the list of individual grant applications.

A reminder that some requests, while worthwhile, are better served by other organizations or levels of government, such as health related items. Requests for funding received in 2025 total \$373,700; the maximum budget available for the Strategic Priorities and Community Grants for 2025 is \$207,360.

Individual motions are not made after review of each application. The Senior Manager of Financial Services will keep a running tally for the Committee to conduct a final review at the end, at which time a formal motion with a recommendation of grant approvals to Council is made.

GRANT TYPE	Amount Requested This Year	Amount Recommended for Approval
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES GRANTS		
676 Kittyhawk Sponsoring Committee Society (on behalf of 676 Kittyhawk Air Cadet Squadron)	\$2,000	\$1,000
Bike Victoria Society O/A Capital Bike	\$0	\$0
Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable	\$15,000	\$13,000
Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria	\$30,000	\$13,000

GRANT TYPE	Amount Requested This Year	Amount Recommended for Approval
Compost Education Centre	\$10,000	\$0
Creatively United for the Planet Society	\$3,000	\$2,800
Crisis Intervention & Public Info Society of GV-Need 2 Suicide Prevention	\$10,000	\$6,000
Greater Victoria Visitors & Convention Bureau (Destination Greater Victoria)	\$15,000	\$15,000
Greater Victoria Volunteer Society (Volunteer Victoria)	\$10,000	\$10,000
Habitat Acquisition Trust	\$5,014	\$2,500
KidSport Greater Victoria	\$10,000	\$0
LifeCycles Project Society	\$20,000	\$16,000
Oak Bay Sea Rescue Society	\$6,000	\$0
Our Children's Centre Society of Greater Victoria	\$5,000	\$0
Peninsula Streams Society	\$25,000	\$25,000
PKOLS - Mount Douglas Conservancy	\$3,850	\$3,850
Saanich Marine Rescue Society	\$8,736	\$5,000
Saanich Neighborhood Place	\$70,000	\$30,000
Shelbourne Community Kitchen Society **	\$20,000	\$20,000
Shelbourne Community Kitchen Society **	\$10,000	\$0
South Island Farmers Institute	\$3,500	\$0
Take a Hike Foundation	\$10,000	\$2,000
The Rithet's Bog Conservation Society	\$1,100	\$1,100
Vancouver Island South Film & Media Commission	\$45,000	\$20,000
Victoria Brain Injury Society	\$2,000	\$0
Victoria Native Friendship Centre	\$10,000	\$6,100
SUBTOTAL: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES GRANTS	\$350,000	\$192,350
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS GRANTS		
FED Urban Agriculture Society	\$1,500	\$0
SUBTOTAL: COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND PLACE-MAKING PROJECTS GRANTS	\$1,500	\$0
COMMUNITY EVENTS GRANTS		
Bike Victoria Society O/A Capital Bike	\$7,000	\$2,000
Gorge Tillicum Community Association	\$7,500	\$7,500
Greater Victoria Sport Tourism Commission	\$2,500	\$2,500
Victoria and Vancouver Island Greek Community Society	\$5,000	\$3,000
SUBTOTAL: COMMUNITY EVENTS GRANTS	\$22,000	\$15,000
TOTALS – ALL GRANT TYPES	\$373,700	\$202,080

GRANT TYPE	Amount Requested This Year	Amount Recommended for Approval
TOTAL GRANTS BUDGET AVAILABLE	\$207,360	\$207,350
FUNDS STILL AVAILABLE		\$10

**Shelbourne Community Kitchen Society initially applied under the Community Building Grant stream and was later moved to the Strategic Priorities Grant stream. They are applying for 2 different programs - the Kitchen Program and the Grocery Gift Card Program.

Following the review of the grant applications the following motion was made:

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and seconded by Councillor Chambers: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee advance their recommendations for grant funding totaling \$207,350 to Council.”

CARRIED

CREDIT CARD FEE RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION

The Director of Finance and Senior Manager of Financial Services presented the Credit Card Fee Recovery Implementation report dated March 3, 2025.

As part of a partial cost recovery process, it is proposed that a 2.4% convenience fee be added to payments paid by credit card effective January 1, 2026. This would be applicable to charges made by Visa and Mastercard. Nine Lower Mainland municipalities contacted currently charge a similar fee ranging from 1.75% to 2.2%. No local municipalities currently charge such a fee – many due to the cost of implementing the process compared to the volume of revenue collected. The system used to collect revenue, Tempest, is not currently configured to collect this fee, requiring an initial expenditure to activate this feature.

Should such a convenience fee be charged approximately \$485,000 would have been recovered, based on 2023 transactions.

It was expressed that this fee is a positive item and required, but may reduce the inclusiveness for recreation participants by adding this additional cost. Director of Finance noted that there are options for payment via other methods (e.g., debit, cash) that do not incur such a fee. In addition, possible ability to reduce future program rate increases (existing Recreation Fees & Charges approved through to September 2025).

The Senior Manager of Recreation advised that currently 50% of patrons use credit cards for payment. The timing of payments often leaves credit card as one of the only options (i.e., first days of registration for items such as spring break programs, swim classes). It was also acknowledged that that we operate in a regional system, with one of the highest costs. We would request additional time to further review this potential impact and possible recommendation on specific items/programs best included.

Chair Brice queried what discussions have been held between departments, the CAO and finance and a policy that meet the needs of recovery but not impact some recreation participants. Director

of Finance notes that recreation is asking for more time. Our recommendations from this current report is for this to be fee to be implemented January 1, 2026. There is time for additional review and input by recreation.

MOVED by Councillor Chambers and seconded by Councillor Brice: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee defer further discussions on Credit Card Fee Recovery Implementation until the May 12, 2025, Finance and Governance Standing Committee meeting. By this time, it is requested that Parks, Recreation and Community Services have further reviewed the potential impacts of this fee.”

CARRIED

GOWARD HOUSE SOCIETY FUNDING REQUEST

Post-COVID the Goward House Society asked for additional funds to make up for inability to cover expenses due to reduced revenue. As they are still in a deficit they met with the Mayor and CAO and then with the committee chair to request additional funds. In each of the past two years, the Goward House Society received \$10,000 from the COVID restart grant. The Goward House Society was advised each time that the funding was a one-time grant.

There are two sources of funds potentially available for such requests. 1) COVID Recovery Grant funds which have activities planned by facilities currently utilizing these monies. 2) Funds within the Community Service Provider Grants due to the CPI increase applied that could be accessed. There is approximately \$7,700 available in this grant.

The Goward House Society was asked what assurances would be in place to ensure that this was not a constant request. The Goward House Society provided directions that they are taking to increase revenue, including: reviewing expenses; increasing membership numbers; raising activity and rental fees; increasing revenue generating activities; applying for other grants; establishing an endowment fund; along with seeking other donations.

Goward House is owned by Saanich and operated by the Goward House Society. They do have a partnership agreement with Saanich on a Low Income Financial Assistance Program supporting program costs for those who are 55+ to participate at a reduced or no cost to the participant.

It was acknowledged that the Goward House Society currently charges a low membership fee and that they were advised last year that the funding provided was with the expectation that they would be more self-sufficient. The Society currently has a five-year funding agreement with Saanich that expires in 2026, which had no cost of living increase built into the payment schedule.

MOVED by Councillor Westhaver and seconded by Councillor Chambers: “That the Finance and Governance Standing Committee recommend to Council that a one-time funding request of \$7,500 be provided to the Goward House Society from the Community Service Provider Grant.”

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Susan Brice, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Tara Judge, Executive Assistant to the CAO

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