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Item No. 7.1.1
Grants Committee
June 1, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of the Grants Committee

SUBMITTED BY: *Original signed*

Eddie Robar, Director, Halifax Transit

DATE: April 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Rural Transit Funding Program 2015/16

ORIGIN

Halifax Transit received two applications to the 2015/16 Rural Transit Funding Program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Authority to expend money required by the Municipality for a grant or contribution to any charitable community organization is granted by section 79(1) (av) of the *HRM Charter*.

Administrative Order number 2014-012-ADM *Rural Transit Grants Administrative Order* provides the authority to provide grants specifically to community organizations that provide community-based transit services in rural communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the funding applications submitted by BayRides and Musgo Rider under Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM Respecting Grants for Rural Transit based on a budget of a maximum total of \$80,000. Due to the applicant's requests exceeding the budgeted amount, each applicant would be eligible to receive a \$10,000 lump sum payment and a pro-rated amount for in-service kilometers, which would result in a total payment to Musgo Rider of approximately \$60,328 and to BayRides of approximately \$19,672.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Transit Funding Program provides grants to approved community based transit agencies at a flat rate of \$0.50/km for every vehicle kilometer logged in-service within the Municipality, limited by budget availability from year to year. The program also provides either \$5,000 or \$10,000 in additional support per year to an organization depending on the level of service they are providing.

Applications for 2015/16 were due January 10, 2015. The 2015/16 Rural Transit Funding Program received two funding requests from:

- BayRides for the annual \$10,000 lump sum payment, plus approximately \$12,500, based on projected in-service kilometres for a total of \$22,500; and
- Musgo Rider for the annual \$10,000 lump sum payment, plus approximately \$65,000, based on projected in-service kilometres, for a total of \$75,000.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Transit received two applications to the Rural Transit Funding Program for the 2015/16 fiscal year. This funding request is summarized below:

A) St. Margaret's Bay Transportation Society "BayRides" Funding Request

BayRides is a community organization established to provide inclusive transportation services in the St. Margaret's Bay area of Halifax Regional Municipality. Its aim is to improve transportation service to residents of the area who need transportation to and from medical appointments, employment, and education and recreation opportunities.

Halifax Transit staff has reviewed the BayRides Rural Transit Funding Program application submitted on January 9, 2015, and (based on recent amendments to the Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM, section 21) have found it to be compliant with the evaluation criteria established in Section 23 of Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM. These criteria and a description of the BayRides application are summarized in the table below:

Table 1: BayRides Application Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	BayRides Application	Criteria Met?
Completeness of application	Application was complete upon submission, based on revisions from AON 2014-013-ADM, section 21. **	Yes
Appropriateness of Business and Governance Model	BayRides is a door to door accessible service with paid drivers in fleet vehicles combined with volunteer drivers using their own cars. The service is anticipated to operate as demand dictates. It is governed by a volunteer board of directors. This is an appropriate business model and governance structure for the service.	Yes
Appropriateness of Market Assessment	BayRides is designed to serve several market segments. Its aim is to improve transportation service to wheelchair users, seniors, youth, low income residents of the area who need transportation to and from medical appointments, employment, education and recreation opportunities and commuters (as a "collector service" for the existing Halifax Transit Tantallon bus stop). BayRides' service area extends from the HRM/Lunenburg County line at Hubbards in the west to the intersection of Routes 3 and the 103 (at exit 4) in the east and from West Dover on	Yes

	Highway 313 in the south to the intersection of the Hammonds Plains Road (Route 333) and the Pockwock Road in the north. There is currently very little competition for transportation service within its catchment area. It is not the intent of BayRides to take business away from other transportation services in the area, but instead complement and connect to services already being offered.	
Appropriateness of Financial Assessment	The financial statement and projected revenues & expenses have been reviewed by Finance staff. BayRides will rely on provincial subsidies to cover operating costs which is standard province wide. The St. Margaret's Bay business case is stronger than average based on the higher population density/square km. Ridership projections and anticipated funding for future years appear reasonable.	Yes
Use of Community Resources	BayRides is a group of community volunteers with an estimated 4000 hours of volunteer time donated. The Bay Treasure Chest, a local 50/50 draw, is run entirely by community volunteers and provides an important source of funding. In addition, a donation of a nine passenger wheelchair accessible minibus was received from the TD bank.	Yes
Any other matter staff considers relevant	For 2015/16, BayRides projects: 135 service km/day for 182 days per year, for a total of about 25,000 km per year.	Yes

** Should this application be approved, the remaining requirements as set out in Section 21A of the Administrative Order will need to be fulfilled prior to any dispersion of funds.

B) Musgo Rider Funding Request

Musgo Rider is a door to door service booked 24 hours in advance providing accessible transportation to residents of Musquodoboit Harbour and the surrounding community. Musgo Rider commenced service in October 2012. Funding to subsidize its operations was received from Halifax Regional Municipality in 2014/15, along with annual funding from the Province of Nova Scotia.

Halifax Transit staff has reviewed the Musgo Rider submission from January 6, 2015 and have found it to be compliant with the revised evaluation criteria established in Section 22 of Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM. These criteria and a description of the Musgo Rider submission are summarized in the table below:

Table 2: Musgo Rider Application Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Musgo Rider Application Year 2 Application	Criteria Met?
Completeness of application	Renewal application included reviewed financial statements, current proof of insurance and confirmation of status from the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.	Yes
Appropriateness of Business and Governance Model	Musgo Rider is a door to door service which operates six days per week. It is governed by a volunteer board of directors. This is an appropriate business model and governance structure for the service.	Yes
Appropriateness of Market Assessment	Musgo Rider provides affordable door to door service to all residents including persons with disabilities, seniors, those who are economically disadvantaged and those with limited access to transportation. Riders use Musgo Rider to travel to a variety of destinations including work, the airport, the grocery store, social events, medical appointments, and to connect to Halifax Transit services. Musgo Rider's service area extends	Yes

	from Lawrencetown, Lake Echo in the west to Ship Harbour in the east. The market assessment states that there are no competing services in the area which offer door to door accessible transportation.	
Appropriateness of Financial Assessment	The financial statements have been reviewed by professional auditors. Musgo Rider will rely on provincial subsidies to cover operating costs which is standard province wide. Ridership projections and anticipated funding for future years appear reasonable.	Yes
Any other matter staff considers relevant	Musgo Rider provided 1970 one way trips between April – December 31, 2014.	Yes
Any other matter staff considers relevant	For 2015/16, Musgo Rider projects: a total of 130,000 km per year.	Yes

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2015/16, \$80,000 is available for Rural Transit Funding in Operating Account R953. The requests from Musgo Rider and BayRides total \$97,500, (\$17,500 more than the actual budgeted amount). As per Administrative Order, section 15 (1), where the program budget is insufficient to provide both the lump sum amount and the per kilometre flat rate, the lump sum payments shall be paid in full, and the per kilometre flat rate will be distributed as a pro-rated per cent for each organization. Based on pro-rating, both organizations would receive a \$10,000 lump sum payment upon approval of the funding, and BayRides would receive approximately \$9,672 for in-service kilometers reported, while MusGo Rider would receive approximately \$50,328 during 2015 for in-service kilometers reported.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Information regarding program eligibility, application timelines, and applicant evaluation are posted on the Halifax Transit website. Legislation mandates that the general public be informed of any grant or contribution through a notice in a newspaper in circulation throughout the region. The Rural Transit Funding Program criteria were approved by Regional Council and formal reports are posted on the Halifax web site and a notice publicizing awards is placed in the Municipal Notices section of the Chronicle-Herald newspaper.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Committee could choose not to approve the funding request made by BayRides and Musgo Rider under the Rural Transit Funding Program.
2. The Committee could choose to approve some part of the funding requested by BayRides and Musgo Rider.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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