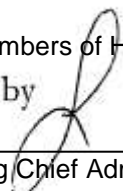




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Item No. 11.1.7
Halifax Regional Council
August 5, 2014

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Mike Labrecque, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by Director

Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, P.Eng. A/Director Transportation & Public Works

DATE: July 2, 2014

SUBJECT: Seniors' Snow Removal Assistance Program

ORIGIN

On April 15, 2013, following a review of its internal business lines, the Spencer House Seniors Center, which had been the administrator of HRM's Seniors' Snow Removal Program for the past 10 years, made the decision to withdraw its support of the Program, leaving HRM searching for a new method of service delivery.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 79(1)(av)(vii) of the HRM Charter permits the Municipality to expend funds on a grant or contribution to a registered Canadian charitable organization.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council provide approval to enter into a multi-year agreement with the Halifax YMCA to administer the Seniors' Snow Removal Assistance Program, subject to annual budget approval, which would allow for stability and confidence with residents and provide the YMCA a strong foundation for increased service delivery through efficiencies of a multi-year program.

BACKGROUND

The Seniors' Snow Removal Assistance Program pre-dated amalgamation in the former City of Halifax and has, since its inception, been administered through Spencer House until last year. Spencer House is an umbrella-organization for a number of seniors' group in HRM. They provide social and service needs (i.e. tax returns) for seniors. They originally were connected with the former City of Halifax prior to amalgamation and administered the Seniors' Snow Removal Assistance Program until April 2013.

Initially in November 2003, the program was funded at \$30,000 by HRM annually, and increased in 2004 to \$50,000. In November 2006, there was a desire from Regional Council to extend sidewalk snow clearing service to include main arterial and transit routes on the peninsula. At that time, as an alternative, staff proposed servicing main arterials and transit routes on the peninsula and increasing the funding to the Seniors' Program to \$360,000 as part of the winter sidewalk service for main arterial and transit routes on the peninsula. This recommendation was subsequently approved and the final increase in funding occurred in December 2009 to the current level of \$400,000, in order to reduce the waiting list. As such, the program, since its inception, has always been about snow removal on private property, administered by a charitable organization for specified individuals with specific needs. The program includes snow removal on: front steps, back steps, front walkway, a pathway to the oil tank and sidewalk, if required.

In order to begin the planning process to identify who will be serviced by the program, registration takes place between September and November; individuals are placed on the list on a first-come, first-served basis. Prospective clients are required to be below a maximum income threshold or be identified as having a recognized disability. For the \$400,000 each season, approximately 425 clients are accepted; those residents are situated in communities ranging from Hubbards to Ecum Secum and all locations in between. The actual snow removal is historically provided by approximately 12 to 15 contractors, each normally having a number of clients from the accepted list.

DISCUSSION

In January 2013, Spencer House provided notice to HRM that, as a result of an internal review of their business lines, they would not be able to continue their involvement in administering the program. Halifax YMCA expressed interest in taking over the program and after obtaining Council approval (October, 22, 2013) and the subsequent agreement with the YMCA dated November 14, 2013, the Halifax YMCA took over the administration.

Despite getting a late start and a very severe winter, the YMCA did a commendable job of registering and servicing 431 clients over the winter season with only 2 clients on the wait list. Below is a breakdown of clients based on in which HRM District their residences were located:

HRM District	# of Senior Snow Removal Clients	Counsellor	Catchment Area
District 1	12	Barry Dalrymple	Waverley - Fall River - Musquodoboit
District 2	101	David Hendsbee	Preston - Chezzetcook - Eastern Shore
District 3	21	Bill Karsten	Dartmouth South - Eastern Passage
District 4	16	Lorelei Nicoll	Cole Harbour - Westphal
District 5	25	Gloria McCluskey	Dartmouth Centre
District 6	24	Darren Fisher	Harbourview - Burnside - Dartmouth East
District 7	8	Waye Mason	Peninsula South - Downtown
District 8	43	Jennifer Watts	Peninsula North
District 9	46	Linda Mosher	Armdale - Peninsula West
District 10	22	Russell Walker	Halifax - Bedford Basin West

HRM District	# of Senior Snow Removal Clients	Counsellor	Catchment Area
District 11	14	Stephen Adams	Spryfield - Sambro Loop - Prospect Road
District 12	10	Reg Rankin	Timberlea - Beechville - Clayton Park West
District 13	24	Matt Whitman	Hammonds Plains - St. Margarets
District 14	29	Brad Johns	Middle/Upper Sackville - Beaver Bank - Lucasville
District 15	22	Steve Craig	Lower Sackville
District 16	14	Tim Outhit	Bedford - Wentworth
Total	431		

While servicing an increase in clients, the YMCA was able to realize a surplus of \$40,743.50. Drawing on their experience from the winter, the YMCA has a number of suggestions for improving service delivery while increasing further the number of clients served. Primary in these suggestions is to have an agreement in place with the perspective organization by late August to ensure sufficient lead time to distribute and receive applications as well as secure contractor services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for this project is available from the approved 2014/15 operating budget to fund the \$400,000 annual cost requirement from Account R781-6399 West Sidewalk Snow and Ice Control.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community consultation has taken place.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications.

ALTERNATIVES

While the recommendation is to remain with the Halifax YMCA and to seek approval for a longer term agreement, alternatives for delivery of the program would be:

- Option 1: Renew the existing contract with the Halifax YMCA for one additional year to administer the Program for the 2014/2015 winter season (workable, but not recommended as it is sub-optimal).
- Option 2: Conduct a Request for Quote for additional service providers who may have an interest in the Program (also workable, but not recommended given the inherent loss of experience already gained by the Halifax YMCA, and the resulting learning curve for the new contractor for the upcoming winter).
- Option 3: Discontinue the Program, putting the funding back into the sidewalk program or holding for a different contribution program to help out the Senior's requirements (not recommended).

ATTACHMENTS

None

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Financial Approval by: _____
Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 490-6308