

Date: April 24, 2025

To: **Mayor and Council**

Name and title: Andy Beesley, Director Civic Facilities & Events

Subject: Unallocated funds from limited duration operating 2025 grant budget

Attachment(s):

**Recommendation(s):**

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated April 24, 2025, from the Director of Civic Facilities & Events titled: “Unallocated funds from limited duration operating 2025 grant budget.”

**Purpose:**

During the March 24, 2025 Council meeting, Council passed the following motion:

“That Council AUTHORIZE administration to review the 13 eligible but declined applications from the limited-duration operating grant intake including the grant application from the Exploration Place and select the recipient(s) best suited based on the prior evaluation, for the remaining \$10,000 from the 2025 grant budget....”.

The grants committee completed a second review of the applications, the evaluation details and rationale, and confirmed that The Exploration Place remained as the “next in line” to receive funding.

Based on the resolution passed by Council, unless otherwise directed, administration will award The Exploration Place a \$10,000 limited duration grant for both 2025 and 2026 as detailed in previous reports.

**Background:**

The 2025 approved budget for the limited duration operating grant is \$131,576. At the Committee of the Whole meeting March 5, 2025, the Committee passed a motion declining a proposed \$20,000 funding allocation to Exploration Place (\$10,000 respectively for 2025 and 2026). At the regular Council meeting April 23, 2025, Council requested that a short list of applicants (eligible but declined) be reassessed, and that Exploration Place be included in that list for review.

From the original assessment completed February 2025, Exploration Place was recommended for funding for several reasons, including:

- **Flagship, Ongoing, Community Programming:** Provides diverse daily and year round programming with a high number of participants (largest museum and the only science Centre in Northern BC)
- **Established Community Partnerships:** Demonstrates active collaboration with key interested partners including advancements to reconciliation with the Lhedli Tenneh First Nation.
- **Clear Benefit to Prince George Residents:** organization has demonstrated long standing service to Prince George Residents.
- **Need for funding:** Facing significant challenges including decreased demand for services and decreased funding. Also included in their application was reference to a decrease in funding

from the BC Arts Council and BC Community Gaming and that the grant dollars would provide critical support during this transitional time, addressing immediate cash flow challenges and allowing Exploration Place to stabilize operations as we implement these changes.

Overall, it was a well prepared application, aligned with the grant criteria, providing all requested information and making a strong case for the need for operational funding to continue programming for the community.

The evaluation team scored and ranked all eligible applications received. Out of the 14 *unfunded* eligible applications, the top three are listed below in order of their scores:

**Exploration Place (requested \$30,000 to support staff wages and overall program expenses)**

- Category: Arts & Culture
- Years of operation: 67 years overall, 37 years as a Society.
- Mission Statement: To provide a local lens on our evolving world by fostering discovery and engagement.
- Mandate: Gathering and preserving artifacts, information and records relevant to the history of the area within the political boundaries of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. Administering and developing a museum for the preservation and interpretation of specimens, artifacts and archive material. Developing public knowledge and appreciation of local Science and Technology in environmental, paleontological, heritage and cultural issues by exhibiting and interpreting acquired artifacts and specimens. Providing professional support services to museums across the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and adjacent districts on request
- # of Staff: 24 full-time, 6 part time seasonal
- # of volunteers: 5 regular
- Target Audience: serve people of all ages, from toddlers to seniors, with a primary focus on families with young children.
- Programs & Services: Museum Galleries and Exhibitions (all ages), School Programs (students K-12), Fort George Railway (all ages), Science Alliance (children ages 6-12), Events & Festivals (all ages), Early Explorers (children ages 3-5), Daily Demos (all ages), Homeschoolers Monday (homeschooled -school aged children) and Birthdays Parties (all ages, mainly under 12)

**BC Schizophrenia Society Prince George Branch (requested \$10,000 for staff wages)**

- Category: Social
- Years of operation: 30 years
- Mission Statement: To provide quality programs, services & supports for individuals living with mental illness & addictions as well as their families/caregivers & service providers in an environment that is inclusive, culturally appropriate & safe for everyone.
- Mandate: The BCSS PG is dedicated to providing quality programs, services & supports for individuals living with mental illness, substance misuse disorders & addictions, as well as their families /caregivers & service providers. We strive to provide our services, supports & educational programs in an environment that is inclusive, culturally appropriate & safe for everyone
- # of Staff: 3 full-time, 5 part time
- # of volunteers: 20-25 regular volunteers plus 10 volunteer board members
- Target Audience: Our programs are targeted towards anyone affected by Mental Illness, substance use disorders & addiction , their families/caregivers & service providers . We primarily serve adults (over 18 ) however we do have a program for youth

- Programs & Services: ACE Activity Centre (adults 18+ living with mental illness, substance use disorders & Addictions), F.A.M.I.L.I.E.S (anyone affected by mental illness & addictions, family/caregivers & community)

**PG Sexual Assault Centre Society (requested \$30,000 to support staff wages and facility costs)**

- Category: Community Safety
- Years of operation: 41 years
- Mission Statement: PGSAC provides counselling and support services in a safe and supportive environment for all ages and all genders to help them overcome the effects of gender-based and sexual violence.
- Mandate: The Prince George Sexual Assault Centre Society provides counselling and support services in a safe and supportive environment for individuals, families and groups. We work with women, men, youth, children, LGBTQIA+ folks and Indigenous peoples and communities to help them overcome the effects of sexual and gender-based violence. Priority access to services are given to anyone who identifies from a marginalized population. We advocate for societal change, that does not tolerate oppression, exploitation or violence in any form. We strive to influence and increase awareness by delivering public education and together as a community create a culture free from sexual and gender-based violence.
- # of Staff: 8 full time, 1 part time
- # of volunteers: 10
- Target Audience: PGSAC provides services to all ages and genders, we focus on providing priority access to anyone who identifies from a marginalized community.
- Programs & Services: Sexual Assault Clinic (all ages, genders), Indigenous Sexual Assault Program (all ages), Stopping the Violence Program (adult women & men), Up Standers (youth), High Risk/Disability Outreach Program (all genders adults & youth), Men's Program (youth & adult males), Children's Program (all genders, children ages 3-13), Teen Program (all genders ages 14-19), Incarcerated Adult Program (all genders, adults), Sex Trafficked Victim Support (all genders and ages)

**Summary and conclusion:**

Administration conducted a second review of the eligible but declined applications including the Exploration Place. The evaluation committee confirmed that the Exploration Place is "next in line" for a limited duration operating grant funding (\$10,000 from the 2025 budget and \$10,000 for 2026). Unless otherwise directed by Council, administration will complete the required process and award the grant as described.

**Respectfully submitted:**

Andy Beesley, Director, Civic Facilities & Events

**Approved:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

PREPARED BY:

Meeting Date: 2025/05/26