

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: May 14, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

SUBJECT: 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships & 2024 World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals and Request for Funding

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Letter dated May 14, 2021 from the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club;
2. Staff Report to Council dated March 12, 2021 regarding 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships & 2024 World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals and Request for Funding;
3. Staff Report to Council dated March 22, 2016 regarding 2019 International Paralympic Nordic World Championships.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council CONSIDERS the request from the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club to provide financial support of up to \$250,000 towards hosting the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships and World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals to be funded from the Major Events Reserve to the extent possible and otherwise from the general tax levy, and subject to the Club entering into a Sponsorship Agreement with the City on terms and conditions satisfactory to Administration.

BACKGROUND:

The Caledonia Nordic Ski Club hosted the 2019 World Para Nordic Skiing Championships, with the City of Prince George providing financial support of \$250,000 from the Major Events Reserve. The Staff Report to Council dated March 22, 2016 is attached for reference.

At the March 22, 2021 Council meeting, Council considered a funding request from the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club to provide financial support of up to \$250,000, from the Major Events Reserve, towards hosting the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships and World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals, pending the club being awarded the events. The Staff Report to Council dated March 12, 2021 is attached for reference.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of casinos, the Major Events Reserve currently does not have funding availability to support this request. If council decides to approve the request and the Major Events Reserve balance at the applicable time is not sufficient, then funding may ultimately have to come from the general tax levy. Because of the numerous requests the City receives to support major events, consideration should be given as to how future requests to support major events will be addressed.

In response to Council's direction on March 22, 2021, the attached letter dated May 14, 2021 from the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club aims to provide details on alternative funding options, funding

commitment timelines, value of in-kind donations, status of the 2019 legacy funds remaining from the 2019 World Para Nordic Skiing Championships, and information on a sponsorship package. It should be noted that in addition to the City's \$250,000 financial contribution in 2019, substantial in-kind staff support was provided to the event.

In 2019/20, based on Prince George's experience with recent international competitions, the City created a Major Sport Event Program Funding Agreement, which serves as the basis for any funding agreement that supports major sporting events. This agreement spells out, for the first time, a framework with clear instructions to recipients of grants about how they should acknowledge the City's support and involve the City in activities aimed at bringing attention, exposure, and visitors to the community. This includes a requirement to work with Tourism Prince George when events are expected to attract participants and spectators from outside of the community in order to provide visitor services. This template would be applied to any funding relationship between the City and the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club for the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships and World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Major Events Reserve is intended to provide broad support to a wide and diverse range of sport events. Funding from this reserve is not intended to be a recurring funding source for a potentially regular event. Administration anticipates numerous upcoming requests from other sport groups.

The Caledonia Nordic Ski Club has amended the \$250,000 funding request timeline as follows:

- \$40,000 in January 2022 to assist with attendance at 2022 World Championships (learning/observation event), announcements, video production, audio visual, branding, marketing and promotion, and miscellaneous planning and preparation expenses;
- \$210,000 in January 2023 to meet deadlines for matching grant applications for Sport Canada International Single Sport Events (ISEE) grant programs.

Providing support for this event is an operating expense and this expense was not budgeted for in the 2021 budget process.

In regard to reserve funds, the only City reserve that is permitted to fund this type of operating expense is the Major Events Reserve. In recent years, the Major Events Reserve has been maintained through a sustainable funding source of annual contributions of \$200,000 from the City's Gaming Revenues (the City has a Host Financial Assistance Agreement with the Province in which the City receives 10% of the net revenues of the Treasure Cove Casino). Due to COVID-19, casinos have been closed since March 2020 and the City is temporarily not receiving any revenues from this program. If Council approves the Club's request, it is anticipated that \$66,387 will be available from the Major Events Reserve, until such time as gaming revenues are restored to replenish the reserve fund.

In regard to the Safe Restart Fund, the eligible costs for this funds include:

- addressing revenues shortfalls;
- facility reopening and operating costs;
- emergency planning and response costs;
- bylaw enforcement and protective services like fire protection and police;
- computer and other electronic technology costs (to improve interconnectivity and virtual communications);

- services for vulnerable persons (e.g. persons living with disabilities, mental illness or addictions, persons experiencing homelessness or other vulnerabilities); and
- other related costs.

The eligible costs of the Safe Restart Fund do not speak to providing grants to third party organizations for events. Administration understands the intent of the funding is to support local governments as they deal with increased operating costs and lower revenues as a result of the pandemic and to ensure that local governments continue to deliver services that people depend on in their communities as identified above.

The City does carry a General Operating Contingency in the amount of 1% of the operating budget but the intent of the contingency is to provide funds that may be required to deal with unanticipated costs necessary to carry out operations. Within the general operating contingency, \$75,000 is earmarked for Council contingency. Council contingency, as well as the remaining balance in the Major Events Reserve are available as funding sources but they would currently not satisfy the full amount.

As the club does not require funding until 2022, if Council supports the Club's request it is Administration's recommendation that the support be funded from the Major Events Reserve to the extent possible, and otherwise from the general tax levy

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The Caledonia Nordic Ski Club successfully hosted the 2019 World Para Nordic Skiing Championships with a contribution of \$250,000 from the City of Prince George. The Club has requested to host the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships and the 2024 World Para Nordic Skiing World Cup Finals from March 4 – 17, 2024. If the Club's request is approved, the Club is seeking \$250,000 in support from the City to assist with hosting those 2024 events.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

PREPARED BY: Jen Rubadeau, Civic Events Coordinator and Kris Dalio, Director of Finance

Meeting Date: [2021/05/31]