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MEMORANDUM

TO: HRM Grants Committee/ Liam McSween; Erica Fleck; Elizabeth Taylor; Scott Sheffield; Aaron Mernaghan; Erin Blay, Cathie Barrington

CC: Bruce Fisher/Jean Myatt, Finance & Asset Management

FROM: Peta-Jane Temple, Finance & Asset Management

DATE: November 3, 2018

SUBJECT: Opportunities for Coordination of Municipal Grant Programs

The scheduling of Grants Committee meetings has been challenging in the last year or two, primarily due to (i) the proliferation of formal municipal grant programs, and (ii) the introduction of report centre and mandatory approvals. The matter has been raised with the Grants Committee and they are agreeable to reviewing how meetings can be scheduled to address time-sensitive requests and the timely payment to non-profit groups (e.g. events, capital projects).

Also, Grants & Contributions is evidently not alone in trying to administer grant payments in a timely manner, collect data regarding past awards or current requests applying to more than one municipal source, and “one-off unsolicited requests”. There may be opportunities for staff to collaborate and improve access to information – both internally and to the public.

The Grants Committee have expressed an interest in hearing from staff and may have input and ideas to share. Therefore, the **December 10, 2018**, meeting of the committee will be devoted to this topic. **The meeting will be held in the Harbour East Community Council Room, Main Floor, Alderney Gate (opposite the Dartmouth Library), 1:00pm to 3pm.**

This memo is an invitation to meet and discuss issues of mutual concern and brainstorm possible solutions. Attendance is voluntary. Delegation is an option. Individuals unable to attend can send written comments to Peter Greechan for inclusion in our discussion/recommendations. Email: greechp@halifax.ca or call 902.490.7310. Feel free to share this memo and gather input from your colleagues.

1. HRM Web Site – Access Page for Grants

- *Is there support for requesting Corporate Communications add a page to the web site (and link to search for “grants”) that lists all HRM grant programs with a link to a*

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department's page with applicable policy, application timelines, application forms, contact information etc.?

The aim would be to establish a “single-point-of-entry” and then link to each program’s policy and procedures. This might reduce misdirected applications, increase awareness, and/or help potential applicants self-manage.

2. Schedule of Grants Committee Meetings

There has been an increase in the number of municipal grant programs and the time required for report approvals has lengthened. This combination appears to put pressure on the timing of Grants Committee meetings. For example, the number of meetings cancelled due to a lack of agenda items and requests to add additional or “special” meetings to accommodate the timing of a staff report.

Is it possible for staff to collaborate on the timing of grant recommendation reports, possibly amending a program’s application deadline, to schedule reports and Grants Committee meetings?

Options include:

- Quarterly Grants Committee meetings of longer duration;
- Dropping a meeting in one or more months with two meetings in a month of high volume (e.g. June);
- Current monthly schedule but with better communication to the Grants Committee/Clerk to avoid last-minute cancellations or a lack of quorum;
- Other?

The ability of the Clerks office to support, volunteers and councillors to accommodate will be part of the discussion.

Report Centre has recently added more time for Legal review (10 days) which will add to the time it takes for an approval.

- *Is it possible to map out the applicable program application deadlines and projected report to Grants Committee date over a 12-month period?*
- *Can some programs be modified to include a multi-year element/category?*

For example, multi-year grants are included for some larger, recurring events; the interim community museums operating grants are multi-year (with annual project grants).

3. Compliance with Section 79(2) of HRM Charter

Legislation requires that grants and contributions issued under the authority of Section 79(1) of the HRM Charter are to be advertised in a newspaper circulating throughout the region. With the

exception of Transit, I don't think we're complying this this obligation especially in relation to "one-off" awards issued outside of an established grant program (ie. under a Contribution Agreement).

- *Can we collaborate on one advert placed early in the following fiscal year that would direct the public to either (i) the shared web site page and/or (ii) the applicable web page for each program?*
- *Is an annual compilation of any merit?*

4. Requests for Data

There is no central repository of information for awards issued in prior years (precedence) or in the current year. Because the delivery of grant programs is fragmented across the organization with no central data repository or reporting assembling multi-year data by sector is grossly inefficient. Also, there are no standards for reporting (type/degree of detail).

- *How might the issue of data collection be addressed to improve efficiency?*
- *Should in-kind assistance be quantified and included? For example, less than market value rent, less than market value property sales, in-kind donations of goods and services, discretionary awards under District Activity/Capital Fund.*

5. Added Items

If time permits, we can add items of mutual interest and if necessary schedule a follow-up meeting.

Please can you send confirmation to Peter Greechan via email so that we can prepare should handouts be included etc.

Thank you for your consideration.