

CORPORATE REPORT

To: CAO for the Recreation, Culture & Airpark Services Commission Date: 2019-09-17

From: Jody Castle, Manager of Recreation, Culture & Airpark Services File No: 7710-21

Subject: RiverMonsters Swim Meet 2020

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Recreation, Culture and Airpark Services Commission recommends that the Fraser Valley Regional District Board authorize a grant in the amount of \$2,756.00 to the RiverMonsters Swim Club, funded from the Community Facility Use Grant Program, for the purposes of renting the Dan Sharrers Aquatic Centre pool and Conference Centre to host a two day swim meet on June 13 and 14, 2020;

AND THAT the Recreation, Culture and Airpark Services Commission support the District of Hope special event application for the use of the 6th Avenue Park field to enable overnight camping for the swim meet.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

BACKGROUND

Each year, the Recreation, Culture & Airpark Services Commission (RCAS) receives requests for free space rentals and facility passes from volunteer organizations and non-profits hoping to reduce costs for events and/or meetings. In an attempt to fairly distribute requests and reduce the amount of time to receive an approval, RCAS established a Donation Policy and Procedure in 2017 allowing staff to facilitate approvals directly based on a list of criteria. Lost revenue for the facilities is compensated from the RCAS Commission's Community Facility Use Grant.

As per the Policy, one prioritized request per organization is considered per year. The organization must apply in writing, and they must be a volunteer or non-profit group to qualify to partake in the Grant. Any request valued at over \$1000 must be brought forward to the RCAS Commission for approval.

The RiverMonsters swim club hosts an annual swim meet at the Dan Sharrers Aquatic Centre (DSAC). Catherine Freimark, President of the RiverMonsters, has once again requested the support of the RCAS Commission to assist with reducing the overall cost of the swim meet. The swim meet is attended by clubs throughout the region, and competition runs from approximately 8am-3pm daily. The pool area at the DSAC has traditionally closed to accommodate this competition, and similar grants were awarded to the swim club in 2017, 2018 and 2019. By reducing overall operating costs of the swim meet, the swim club is able to keep annual fees affordable for young swimmers.

DISCUSSION

The RiverMonsters were established in 2016, and the number of swimmers participating has increased each year. This past year, the swim club has made large financial contributions to improvements at the DSAC. Catherine Freimark, President of the RiverMonsters Swim Club, was able to secure grant funding in 2018-19 for three different projects. A personal donation from the Sharrers family funded the purchase of a trophy case that sits near the entrance to the viewing area. This is used to advertise current events for the swim club, as well as display trophies from both past and present swimmers. A new score clock now sits high above the pool deck, and was used for the first time at the 2019 swim meet. The RiverMonsters secured funding for this purchase from Fraser Health as well as additional funding from personal donations, and RCAS staff assisted with the installation. The final big improvement of 2019 was the purchase of six new dive blocks. The old blocks were becoming unstable, particularly when used by adult swimmers. Funding for this project was a joint effort between Regional District Area B and the District of Hope. The dive blocks were recently installed during the annual maintenance period at the DSAC, and swimmers will be able to use them for the 2019-2020 season. It is anticipated that these improvements, valued at an estimated \$56,000, will attract more swimmers to the club, as well as to the annual swim meet held at the DSAC.

The club has also had several successes in the pool over the past year, including winning 2 gold medals at the 2019 provincials. The 2019 swim meet had 11 clubs and 305 swimmers attend the swim meet in Hope, with several families electing to spend the entire weekend in the area. Similar attendance is expected for the 2020 event.

The swim meet has historically been a great event for the entire community. Spectators are able to access the facility at no cost to come and support the local club, and local businesses benefit from families visiting their establishments.

In addition to the annual swim meet, there may be an opportunity to host a regional swim meet in 2020 or future years. With the replacement of the dive blocks and the addition of the time clock, the RiverMonsters are hopeful that they will soon be selected to host the regionals that involves approximately 350 swimmers competing to attend the BC Provincials.

COST

Dan Sharrers Aquatic Centre would be closed to the public during swim meet times, but may reopen in the evening after the conclusion of the day's activities. The set up for the swim meet would remain in

the pool on Saturday night, however it may be possible to open a portion of the pool to the public on Sunday evening after the conclusion of the meet. Access to the gym and arena facilities will not be impacted. Set-up for the event will begin the day before the swim meet, and includes the installation of additional seating, lane ropes, and starting blocks. Lifeguarding costs are estimated at \$170 per eight hour shift, and two extra guards are required per day. The RiverMonsters have historically covered the costs of the additional lifeguards for the swim meet.

| Item | Rate | Total Cost |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Pool rental | \$143.50/hour for 7 hours per day | \$2009 |
| Conference Centre | \$323.50 per day | \$647 |
| Conference Centre Kitchen | \$50.00 per day | \$100 |
| | | Total Grant Requested: \$2756 |

CONCLUSION

The RiverMonsters Swim Club is a valued community club that continues to grow. They have worked hard to secure grants to fund improvements at the DSAC. The annual swim meet has increased in size and scope each year. The grant for the swim meet allows the RiverMonsters to keep operating costs at a minimum, which in turn reduces the yearly fees for families that participate in the club.

COMMENTS BY:

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Acting Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.