

Supports Item No. 1
CS&B Committee Agenda
November 30, 2006

CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



Report Date: November 14, 2006
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Meeting Date: November 30, 2006

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: General Manager of Corporate Services in consultation with General
Manager of Community Services Group

SUBJECT: Process for Miscellaneous Grants within the "Other" Grants Category

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the elimination of the Miscellaneous Grants category from the "Other" Grants category and that Council approve the transfer of \$5,000 budget from "Miscellaneous" Grants to the Community Services Grants plus \$5,000 budget increase without offset to the Community Services Grants in 2007 and direct the Community Services Group to develop an approach to animal-related grant applications that have been traditionally funded under Miscellaneous Grants category.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

As noted in this report, the City has a long track record of supporting civic programs and events through its Civic Grants Program. According to its priority, Council has established Community Services Grants, Cultural Grants, Childcare Grants, Environmental Grants and Other Grants as its prime focus. Other Grants was established to provide funding for grant requests that did not meet the criteria for the clearly defined grant categories. Over the years, the Civic Grants program has evolved into a very complicated program with multiple categories and sub-categories. "Miscellaneous Grants" was established as a "catch-all" category and has been administered "generally on a one-time basis".

Council has established the application deadline and votes required for approving the miscellaneous grants. However, it appears that the miscellaneous grants category has

never been a top priority as it is evidenced by budget reallocations. Nevertheless, Staff has always presented all grant applications that fall under the category to Council for consideration and approval. Due to the broad nature of the grant category and the lack of clearly-defined objectives and assessment criteria, dealing with these requests on an individual basis has been presenting challenges in administration and evaluating these requests.

In consideration of the foregoing and to streamline the grant administration process, the City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the Recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

Applications for grants under the "Other" Grants category are to be submitted to the City before March 31 of the current budget year, and the requests are generally submitted to Council in a single report.

Approval of grants requires eight affirmative votes of Council.

PURPOSE

This is a response to Council's July 20, 2006 direction that "Staff report back in the fall on a process for the 'Other' category grants." This report, prepared by the General Manager of Corporate Services Group, reviews the City's civic grant programs in general and the history and activities about the "Miscellaneous" grants category in particular, recommends restructuring of the "Miscellaneous" grants within the "Other" grants category.

BACKGROUND

This is a response to Council's July 20, 2006 direction that "Staff report back in the fall on a process for the 'Other' category grants." This report, prepared by the General Manager of Corporate Services Group, reviews the City's civic grant programs in general and the history and activities about the "Miscellaneous" grants category in particular, recommends restructuring of the "Miscellaneous" grants within the "Other" grants category.

On June 22, 1989, Council approved the restructuring of the "Other" Grants funding into three separate categories: Major Facilities, Annual Recurring and Miscellaneous. Council receives specific reports related to Major Facilities and Annual Recurring and Miscellaneous Grants within this Category.

In July 2006, staff reported to Council asking for approval of grants under the "Miscellaneous" grants within the "Other" grants category. During the meeting, Council directed staff to report back on the process for the "Other" grants category. This is a response to Council's request.

DISCUSSION

City's Civic Grants Program

Since 1978, the City has developed four major categories within Civic Grants Program: Community Services Grants, Culture Grants, Childcare Grants, and Other Grants. Total grant budget amounts to \$14,188,350 in year 2006. Currently, the majority of the grants - more than 99% - has been successfully administered within the Community Services Group in accordance with established policy framework and procedures; the balance including Environmental Grants and Miscellaneous Grants has been reported to Council on a case-by-case basis by other departments when the applications are received.

Other Grants category:

In June 1989, Council approved the restructuring of funding into three categories:

- Major Facilities;
- Annual recurring, and
- Miscellaneous.

Major Facilities Grants: The Office of Cultural Affairs within Community Services Group administers this category in accordance with the established policies and procedures.

Annual Recurring Grants: There are four grants under this category:

- Vancouver City Planning Commission Grant - administered by Commission Manager, Central Area Planning Branch, CSG;
- Celebration Grants - currently administered by the Office of Cultural Affairs within CSG.
- Rent Subsidy Grants - administered by Community Services group
- Environmental Grant - administered by Engineering Services Department

Miscellaneous Grants: In the Minutes of Standing Committee of Council of Finance and Priorities on June 22, 1989, it states:

"Miscellaneous grants have been given to a wide variety of organizations and activities over the years, generally on a one-time basis...while having to deal with these requests on an individual basis throughout the year may be frustrating, there is no other way to ensure that emergency applications receive a hearing before Council. A more formal process would deny funding to some organizations that Council might otherwise wish to support."

"That March 31st be established as the deadline for the consideration of grants under all categories of the 'Other' grants budget"

The allocated operating budget for Miscellaneous Grants has been reduced over the years. The operating budget allocated to Miscellaneous Grants was \$148,739 in 2002. \$100,000 budget for Vancouver Heritage Conservation Foundation was also included under this category

in 2002 and the full amount of the budget (\$100,000) has been permanently reallocated to the Vancouver Heritage Conservation Foundation since 2002. Furthermore, in October 2002, Council approved a permanent reallocation of \$48,000 from the "Miscellaneous" category to support the creation of a "Celebration" grants category for community-based festivals and celebrations to be implemented in 2003. Office of Cultural Affairs within Community Service Groups is administering the Celebration Grants.

Since 2003, the funding for Miscellaneous Grants has been limited to \$5,000 in the operating budget. All applications that fall into this category - reported to and approved by Council on an individual basis - have been funded from the Contingency Reserve.

In general, the City has a long track record of supporting civic programs and events by providing funds through Civic Grants program. However, the Civic Grants program itself has evolved into a very complicated one with multiple grant categories and sub-categories since its restructuring in 1978. The "Miscellaneous grants" has been given to a wide variety of organizations and activities over the years. However, it appears that the Miscellaneous Grants category has never been a top priority. This is evidenced by the fact that allocated operating budget for Miscellaneous Grants has been reduced to \$5,000 through restructuring and reallocation over the years. Nevertheless, Staff has always presented all grant applications that fall under "Miscellaneous Grants" category to Council for approval or consideration.

Being a catch-all category and generally on a one-time basis, there is no defined criteria and formal process in place for the "Miscellaneous Grants" category. This has created an administrative challenge to staff in presenting such applications to Council; it also presents difficulties and challenges for Council to assess such applications without any defined evaluation criteria. Such characteristics of the Miscellaneous Grants has been well recognized and reflected in Council directive stated in the minutes of June 22, 1989 committee meeting.

Having reviewed the nature and the history of the "Miscellaneous Grants" category, Staff recommend that the "Miscellaneous Grants" category be eliminated for the following reasons:

- No clearly-defined objectives for the grant category;
- Impractical to develop a complete set of criteria for assessment;
- Lack of assurance of fairness in the evaluation and approval process; and
- Extra administrative workload

However, some organizations have been regularly applying for grants under "Miscellaneous" Grants category. Most recently, Council has approved grant applications from the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC from year 2002 to 2006 under the "Miscellaneous" category and \$5,000 has been awarded to them each year. In 2006, Council has also approved a grant request from BC SPCA under this category and approved \$5,000 with funding from the Contingency Reserve.

Given that the City has provided support to animal-related grant applications from the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC and BC SPCA in the past several years, and to continually support such requests in the future and streamline the grant administration, staff would also recommend that Council approve the transfer of \$5,000 budget from the 'Miscellaneous' grants category to the Community Services Grants plus \$5,000 budget increase in 2007 to the Community Services Grants without offset and direct the Community Services Group to develop a grant program to administer animal-related applications in the future, as the

Community Services Group has the most experience and expertise in grant management within the organization and it is currently managing more than 99% of Civic Grants program.

In the future, grant applications will be accepted and reviewed only if an existing grant category has been set up and the application process has been established as well. If Council wish to support programs outside the scope of the existing categories, Council may do so by directing appropriate department to report such requests to Council for consideration; and such requests, if approved by Council, will have to be funded from Contingency Reserve. This is consistent with the current process to access Contingency Reserve funds. Therefore, outside agencies will not be able to request grants through Contingency Reserve.

The following table presents the current structure for Civic Grants Programs with the 2006 budgets and administrating departments.

Table 1: Civic Grants Programs

Grant Group	Grant Category	2006 Budget	Administered by
Community, Cultural, and Childcare Grants	Community Services Grants	\$3,826,100	Community Services Group
	Cultural Grants	\$5,429,468	Community Services Group
	Childcare Grants	\$1,075,300	Community Services Group
Other Grants	Major Facilities Grants	\$3,716,400	Community Services Group
	Annual Recurring Grants	\$136,082	CSG except for Environmental grant by Engineering Services
	Miscellaneous Grants	\$5,000	Corporate Services Group
Total		\$14,188,350	

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If Council should approve the recommendation, there would be a transfer of \$5,000 budget from Miscellaneous Grants category within "Other" grants to Community Services Grants and \$5,000 budget increase without offset to the Community Services Grants in the Community Services Group in 2007.

CONCLUSION

This report updates Council on:

- The history and the structure of the Civic Grants programs;
- The history and nature of the Miscellaneous Grants category under the Other Grants; and
- Reasoning and analysis on the proposed process change for the Miscellaneous Grants category.

In conclusion, to focus on the grant programs with well-defined objectives and assessment criteria which reflect Council priorities and long-term strategies, Staff recommend that Council approve the elimination of the Miscellaneous Grants category from Other Grants category and transfer of \$5,000 budget from Miscellaneous Grants category to Community Services Grants plus \$5,000 increase without offset to the Community Services Grants budget in 2007; Council will also direct the Community Services Group to develop a grant program to administer such grant requests that provide services related to animal welfare to the public.

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