



To: Council
From: Debi LucasSwitzer & Kevin Amelotte
Date of Meeting: March 23, 2022
Subject: AR – Process to Submit Application to Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant

Recommendation:

That Council directs the CAO and Director of Parks and Recreation to obtain the additional information required to support a grant application to the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant program for the Long Sault Arena, and further
Report back to Council with the findings, updated cost information and a recommendation.

Executive Summary:

Township Council received a presentation in 2021 that suggested savings were possible if the Township were to add solar panels to the roof of the Long Sault Arena. Information was reviewed and later John Barros of Next Energy was consulted to determine if the information provided was accurate.

Township Council received an overview of the energy consumption and potential savings that may be achieved should the Township retrofit the Long Sault Arena roof and add solar panels. The report from John Barros of Next Energy Development Group at the March 9, 2022 regular meeting outlined a series of steps needed to add solar panels and provided a preliminary project cost of \$2,130,960. The report indicated that if the Township Council decided to move ahead with an application there may be a grant under the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant of approximately 80%.

On review of the Grant program eligibility and approval requirements additional grant requirement elements need investigation and information prior to submission of a grant application. The required grant program elements include not only the savings that may be achieved through the addition of solar panels. Grant program requirements are: a) start date, b) improvements for high need communities, c) improved accessibility, d) decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, e) increase in energy savings greater than 25%, f) proof of climate resiliency and best practices, g) confidence in ability to deliver.

Background:**The Grant Program**

The Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant program was introduced by the Federal Government in December 2020. The program is financed to a total of \$1.5Billion over five years. The program supports retrofits, repairs or upgrades of existing publicly accessible community buildings and construction of new ones.

Funding through the program is intended to improve the availability and condition of community buildings, particularly for areas with populations that are underserved, have higher needs, and serve equity-deserving groups while making the buildings more energy efficient, lower carbon, resilient, and high performing. Higher needs are defined as barriers that result in people not being able to participate in society. The barriers include attitudinal, economic, environmental, historic, and/or social barriers based on age, sex, ethnicity, disability, economic status, family status, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, etc. If this criteria is not met projects are not eligible for funding.

Applications may be made through several streams – retrofits (\$860Million) and new build projects (\$430Million) and approved projects must be completed over a five-year period 2021-2026. Small to medium retrofit projects range in size \$100,000 to \$2.9Million for eligible expenses. Large retrofit projects range in size from \$3Million to \$25Million for eligible expenses. New build projects range from \$3Million to \$25Million in total eligible expenses.

Retrofit projects allow for expansion of the building footprint up to 30% provided there is no increase in the green house gas emissions.

Information Available to Date

EVB Engineering completed a preliminary review of the Long Sault Arena and the structural integrity of the roof. The process was somewhat hampered by the lack of actual construction drawings for the facility. Several recommendations were made relative to the work needed to ensure the roof can support the solar panels. The most significant is the need to investigate the foundation and footings areas to ensure there is sufficient strength to support a new roof and solar panel system.

Mr. Barros conducted a comprehensive review of the arena's hydro use, consulted with Ontario Hydro, reviewed with Township Engineers the roof structure and provided Council with an overview of his findings.

The findings indicate the Township may in fact save on energy costs by installing a solar panel system on the Long Sault Arena roof. The structure of

the roof will require significant renovations to accommodate the solar panels, however given the age of the building such a renovation is appropriate.

On the surface it appears the project may be eligible for a Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant through the Federal Department of Infrastructure.

In addition to the energy savings, the grant application must also demonstrate the following requirements are met;

- a) Start date
- b) Improvements for high needs communities
- c) Improved accessibility
- d) Decrease in greenhouse gas emissions
- e) Increased energy savings greater than 25%
- f) Proof of climate resilience and best practices
- g) Confidence in ability to deliver

Five mandatory Grant requirements (b, c, d, e and f) are not yet addressed, and additional information and research is necessary to ensure the Grant application requirements are met.

The work completed by EVB Engineering related to the roof structure and the research by Mr. Barros of Next Energy indicating energy savings are possible, however these are initial steps in the Grant application process. It is noted however that additional work is required from Administration and the Township's engineering consultants to understand the total costs of the project.

Among other criteria of the Grant program is the need to identify and conform to project readiness criteria. The classification of estimates used in Mr. Barros' report for the reconstruction of the roof structure are at best Class D estimates. More work is needed in relation to the figures used for the foundation and footings costs, and the issue of supply chain for structural roof components. The Grant program views Class D estimates less desirable than Class C, B or A. It would be very appropriate for a more indepth review of the reconstruction requirements, particularly for the foundation and footings, and project costs to support a strong grant application. The current climate for construction and supply chain capabilities leads Administration to believe it is important to obtain stronger cost information for the reconstruction work.

The current information does not include any stakeholder engagement, one of the processes included in the project application. Some work is needed in this area.

Finally, the most significant issue requires a review of what additional improvements can be made to support accessibility of and in the building are

needed. This may include items such as expanding the structure to provide more program and meeting room space, signage or improved electronic communications devices to support individuals with sight or hearing loss. Improved accessibility options that support the underserved and high needs communities are mandatory for any application.

The outstanding elements needed to submit an application to the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Grant will have an effect on the overall budget outlined in Mr. Barros' report. If the additional information reveals costs to be greater than \$869,039 (highest eligible project amount for a medium sized project), the project moves into a different grant category with different submission requirements.

Finally, a review of the services provided, consultation with the user groups and a determination of when, if the project is approved – it may be integrated in to the overall service delivery program for the Arena is needed.

Alignment with Community Strategic Plan:

Goal 2: Sustainable Infrastructure

Objective 2.1: Servicing Capacity

Risk and Asset Management Considerations:

- a) To submit in advance of obtaining the information to demonstrate the project meets all Grant requirements means the application will be denied.
- b) To submit without stronger cost for reconstruction information means the Township will not receive full benefit from the Grant program if the costs are greater.

Options:

- a) Require Administration to submit the grant application immediately.
- b) Require Administration to complete the work outlined;
 - a. Research and address outstanding Grant program requirements
 - b. Obtain stronger roof reconstruction cost information
 - c. Research and include improvements for accessibility
 - d. Undertake the community engagement neededUpon completion of the additional work necessary report back to Council.
This is the recommended option.
- c) Other as instructed by Council

Financial Impact:

- a) Township Council will need to provide instructions for funding this non-budgeted project. Timing for grant application reviews and approvals or rejections is not known. Minimum estimate for the Township portion at the date of this report is \$426,192.

Others Consulted:

Directors of Parks and Recreation and Corporate Services