

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 13, 2020

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Tiffany MacLaren, Community Economic and Cultural Coordinator

SUBJECT: Funding for Ramsay Recreational Halls

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve three year annual funding (2021-2023) for Union Hall at \$5,500;

THAT Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve three year annual funding (2021-2023) for Clayton Hall at \$14,500;

AND FURTHERMORE, THAT Ramsay Recreation Facility Funding be conditional upon entering into formal funding agreements between the Municipality of Mississippi Mills and the respective organizations outlining financial contributions and precluding organizations from making additional funding requests for the duration of the funding agreement (end of 2023)

BACKGROUND

Clayton Hall and Union Hall are independent recreational facilities in Mississippi Mills. Dedicated volunteers run both of these organizations and raise funds through annual fundraisers, rental fees and grants. These facilities host events that cater to Mississippi Mills residents as well as visitors. Having recreational facilities in our rural communities allows residents to enjoy events and leisure activities without the need to travel far.

Union Hall

Constructed in 1857 through the efforts of local farmers and the Ramsay District Library Board, Union Hall has been used continuously for over 150 years as a library, meeting hall, place of worship, and a venue for family celebrations, memorial services, dances, children's parties, and cultural activities. It is thanks to the Union Hall Women's Institute that the hall has an expansive stage and a dance floor.

Neighbours gather for pancake breakfasts, blueberry teas, public information sessions, studio tours, a weekly farmers market, and an autumn potluck and talent show.

Clayton Hall

The Clayton Community Centre is a location for weddings, parties, meetings, family reunions, baseball tournaments and a variety of functions.

The Hall can seat a maximum of 233 people comfortably and is equipped with adequate kitchen, bar and/or canteen facilities, a stage/performance area (with piano) as well as a change room off the staged area.

DISCUSSION

Prior to 2020 Mississippi Mills provided both facilities with some annual funding through the Municipal grant process. This funding has not been guaranteed however the facilities have both received funding the past several years. In 2019 Union Hall received \$3000.000 and Clayton Hall received \$4,500. Committees were required to re-apply annually and don't receive confirmation or funding until the Municipal Budget is passed by Council. This was time consuming for organization volunteers and made advance planning difficult.

For 2020 both facilities were given funding based on 35% of their operating budgets and were asked to submit business plans for their facilities. These business plans are attached.

Annual funding from the Municipality is intended to allow these organizations to strengthen operations, make progress on capital projects and work towards sustainability. Both organizations have capital projects they would like to complete that will increase their ability to market and rent out the facility.

Through discussions with these volunteer organizations it was noted that they could use some assistance identifying and applying for grants. Staff continues to make efforts to share applicable funding announcements as they come up. A Funders Forum for 2020 did not happen due to Covid-19 restrictions but staff plan to work towards a virtual event in early 2021. This event would offer information on funding organizations, resources available as well as tips and tricks when applying for grants and would be open for all Mississippi Mills community groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is \$20,000 in the 2021 Draft Budget for Ramsay Recreation Facilities. Based on a review of their respective business plans and staff recommends splitting the funds with Union Hall receiving a grant of \$5500 and Clayton Hall receiving a grant of \$14,500 for 2021.

Union Hall is open 6 months of the year. Clayton Hall is open 12 months of the year. Clayton Hall has a considerable capital work wish list that will cost them between \$150,000-\$250,000 to execute. The Municipality recommends they use some of their operating funds to hire a professional grant writer to assist with larger capital type grants as they come up.

SUMMARY

Staff commends the Union Hall and Clayton Hall volunteers on the time and efforts they have invested in developing business plans. These plans will help guide decision making as they plan for the future of their facilities.

Staff recommends that the Municipality provide annual funding to Union Hall (\$5,500) and Clayton Hall (\$14,500) for the next three years. Annual sustainable funding for these hardworking volunteer organizations will allow them to make progress on capital projects, strengthen organization and work towards sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by


Tiffany MacLaren

Community Economic and Cultural Coordinator


Ken Kelly, CAO