

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: January 23, 2024
REPORT: 23-012
FROM: Community Engagement & Cultural Services
FILE: 1850-20-2024
SUBJECT: 2024 FEE FOR SERVICE FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the General Manager of Community Engagement and Cultural Services be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council approve the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) entering into Fee for Service Funding Agreements for 2024 with:

- Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council up to the amount of \$73,500;
- Whistler Animals Galore up to the amount of \$120,750;
- Whistler Off-Road Cycling Association up to the amount of \$282,450;
- Whistler Museum and Archives Society up to the amount of \$218,400; and
- Arts Whistler up to the amount of \$577,500;

subject to each of the above-named recipients agreeing to the terms and conditions of a recipient-specific service agreement between the RMOW and each recipient organization.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the 2024 Fee for Service (FFS) funding process and the recommended FFS funding investments for 2024.

☐ Information Report ☒ Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

DISCUSSION

Background

In accordance with *Council Policy A-39 Fee for Service* (Policy A-39), attached as Appendix A, the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) provides FFS funding and/or Value in Kind (VIK) benefits to not-for-profit organizations that provide programs and/or services that Council considers necessary or desirable to move the RMOW toward achieving the vision, goals, and objectives identified in its Official Community Plan (OCP). This report pertains to five 2024 FFS funding applicants identified in the Recommendation.

On August 1, 2023, RMOW staff provided the FFS application template to five organizations through the invitation only based process described in Policy A-39. RMOW staff received completed FFS applications from each applicant on or prior to the due date of August 25, 2023.

Analysis

Policy A-39 states that, “FFS is designed to ensure Whistler receives a range of programs and services intrinsic to Whistler that, if not provided by FFS recipients, would necessitate the delivery by the RMOW at a cost that is likely greater than the RMOW’s FFS contribution to each FFS recipient.” Separately, the General Manager (GM) of Community Engagement and Cultural Services (CECS) and the CECS Administrative Assistant, assessed each application based on the criteria in Policy A-39, specifically:

- Proposed service is necessary to provide in Whistler, consistent with the OCP (40 per cent weighting);
- The applicant is uniquely positioned to deliver the services (20 per cent weighting);
- Implications if FFS funds were not available (20 per cent weighting);
- Key performance indicators (10 per cent weighting); and,
- Thoroughness, accuracy, and clarity (10 per cent weighting).

The independent assessments of the GM CECS and the CECS Administrative Assistant were aligned on the proposed 2024 FFS investment for each applicant. Through the “Five-Year Financial Plan 2024-2028 Bylaw No. 2424, 2024” (Five-Year Financial Bylaw), Council approved a five per cent increase to the FFS budget, in recognition of the much higher inflationary costs of late related to cost of goods and services provided by these organizations. The FFS budget is funded both by taxation and the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). It is staff’s recommendation that the five per cent increase be applied evenly to each organization on their 2023 FFS amount for the coming year.

Each year staff and Council are challenged with difficult trade offs in the budget process that must necessarily support asset management (including reserves), deliver operations effectively, and accomplish Council’s strategic plan goals. Within this context, staff believe that the funding recommended in 2024 for each FFS recipient is reasonable and balanced alongside other competing budgetary pressures.

2024 FFS Staff Recommendations

	2023	2024 Ask	Proposed 2024
Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council (SSISC)	\$70,000	\$73,500	\$73,500
Whistler Animals Galore (WAG)	\$115,000	\$200,000	\$120,750
Whistler Off-Road Cycling Association (WORCA)	\$269,000	\$282,750	\$282,450
Whistler Museum	\$208,000	\$225,500	\$218,400
Arts Whistler (AW)	\$550,000	\$800,000	\$577,500

A description of how the organizations will use their 2024 FFS funding and the FFS funding source for each organization is provided below and their applications are provided in Appendices B through F.

Purpose of FFS Funds

Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council

2022 FFS Agreement	2023 FFS Agreement	2024 FFS Application Ask	2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Total 2023 VIK Contribution
NA	\$70,000	\$73,500	\$73,500	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$7,551

The SSISC's mission is to minimise the threat of invasive species that negatively impact the environment, the economy and human health. FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages, equipment and supplies for:

- Invasive species expertise, coordination and program development;
- Training, education and outreach;
- Invasive plant eradication field program; and
- Environmental protection bylaw implementation support.

SSISC delivers services that are critical to protecting Whistler's biodiversity and ecosystems. This organization links well with the OCP and Council's Strategic Priority of Climate Action. FFS funding is leveraged by the organization to raise additional funds and provides a critical service that the RMOW would be required to fill.

SSISC is also a beneficiary of VIK benefits for rent amounting to an approximate assessed value of \$517/month (\$6,214/year) to operate out of the municipal Forestry Building in Cheakamus as well as BC Hydro fees.

WAG

2022 FFS Agreement	2023 FFS Agreement	2024 FFS Application Ask	2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Total 2023 VIK Contribution
\$100,071	\$115,000	\$200,000	\$120,750	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$90,868

WAG's mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to homeless and lost dogs and cats in our community and to be advocates in finding their forever homes.

FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages and administrative wages for Bylaw impound services (animals delivered to WAG from Bylaw Officers), rehoming and rescuing; and outreach.

WAG provides an essential service in the form of impound services. They can scale the operation and raise funds from a variety of sources.

WAG receives VIK from the RMOW through utility costs and rental subsidies for use of their space amounting to an assessed value of approximately \$87,000 a year. In addition, WAG receives Fortis Gas fees and dog license and impound fees. In 2022 they received \$2,648 and to date in 2023 \$2,306.

WORCA

2022 FFS Agreement	2023 FFS Agreement	2024 FFS Application Ask	2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Total 2023 VIK Contribution
\$249,000	\$269,000	\$282,750	\$282,450	\$279,760 MRDT \$2,690 General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$5,250

WORCA's mission is to foster mountain bike experiences and deliver world-class trails.

FFS funding is primarily allocated for program wages for trail maintenance.

WORCA's focus on trail maintenance underscores the importance of trail safety and the visitor experience. In addition, WORCA's volunteers also contribute their time and talent to trail maintenance. The organization works closely with RMOW Parks and Trails and Resort Operations to ensure alignment on priorities and tasks. Their work aligns with the OCP and aligns with Council's Strategic Plan Priority of Smart Tourism.

WORCA is also a beneficiary of funding from the RMOW for their Back Forty event amounting to \$5,250 in both 2022 and 2023.

WHISTLER MUSEUM

2022 FFS Agreement	2023 FFS Agreement	2024 FFS Application Ask	2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Total 2023 VIK Contribution
\$195,000	\$208,000	\$225,500	\$218,400	General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$148,231

The Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, document and interpret the natural and human history of mountain life – with an emphasis on Whistler – and to provide a forum in which to present an innovative range of exhibitions and education programs to enrich the lives of residents and guests.

FFS funding is primarily for administrative wages to operate the Museum.

The Museum offers important archival services, supports cultural and heritage tourism, and preserves the history of how the town and mountain developed.

The Museum receives various forms of VIK from the RMOW through rental subsidies valued at \$63,500 per year plus Fortis Gas fees. They also received funding for their Discover Nature program, valued at \$9,211 in 2022, and \$20,309 in 2023, funding for the Whistler Interpretative Sign Project amounting to \$47,468 (2022) and \$63,157 (2023), Geo Park Panels \$4,069 (2022) and Mural Touch Ups \$3,675 (2022).

ARTS WHISTLER

2022 FFS Agreement	2023 FFS Agreement	2024 FFS Application Ask	2024 FFS Staff Recommendation	Funding Source	Total 2023 VIK Contribution
\$520,000	\$550,000	\$800,000	\$577,500	\$572,000 MRDT \$5,500 General Operations Fund (property tax)	~ \$871,833

AW's mission is to make art happen.

2024 FFS funds will be used primarily for wages and program expenses for:

- Maury Young Arts Centre operational costs;
- Staffing costs; and
- Producing and executing events for locals and visitors, both admission-based and free.

AW leverages the FFS contribution to raise additional funds and contributes significantly to the arts and culture experience in the community, providing a range of events, programs and village animation for all ages and interests throughout the year. In addition to the FFS contribution by the RMOW, the RMOW provides additional support to AW through various other sources including VIK rental subsidies amounting to an assessed value of \$681,000 per year, and in 2023 rental revenue amounting to \$16,620, Festival Events and Animation funding for village animation support amounting to \$132,810, utility costs amounting to \$38,522 (to Nov 2023) and other miscellaneous costs.

Conditions in FFS Agreements

Several conditions will be applied to each of the organizations regarding the optimization of FFS funding including but not limited to:

- Public recognition by the recipient of their FFS funding.
- Defining the eligible use of FFS funds in each case.
- Including an RMOW appointee on their Board of Directors.
- Providing FFS status reports to RMOW staff in a timely manner.
- Limiting eligibility for other RMOW programs (e.g. the Community Enrichment Program).
- Inclusion of "up to" wording in the agreement regarding total funding amounts to ensure recipients fulfill their commitments.

Each of the five organizations were recipients of FFS funding in 2023 and all have fulfilled the obligations of their agreements to date.

Looking ahead

The recommended FFS investments are for one year as this provides staff the opportunity to review the Policy A-39 now that it is two years old, to ensure it is meeting the goals and objectives of staff and Council. For instance, the Policy A-39 is vague on the procedure and budget process to evaluate whether a new organization should be added to the FFS invite-only application process.

OPTIONS

Options for Council's consideration are:

1. Support the specific funding levels for all recipients recommended by staff in this report.
2. Reallocate funds between the recipients within the total FFS 2024 budget allotment (\$1,272,600) and identify which existing funds to transfer between organizations for any changes (general taxation versus MRDT).

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions

Council Policy A-39: Fee For Service – guides the RMOW in the FFS program, attached as Appendix A.

[December 6, 2022: Administrative Report No. 22-150](#): 2023 Fee For Service Funding Recommendations.

[November 16, 2021: Administrative Report No. 21-130](#): *Fee For Service Council Policy A-39*

2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the high-level direction of the RMOW to help shape community progress during this term of Council. The Strategic Plan contains four priority areas with various associated initiatives that support them. This section identifies how this report links to the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Priorities

☐ Housing

Expedite the delivery of and longer-term planning for employee housing

☒ Climate Action

Mobilize municipal resources toward the implementation of the Big Moves Climate Action Plan

☒ Community Engagement

Strive to connect locals to each other and to the RMOW

☒ Smart Tourism

Preserve and protect Whistler's unique culture, natural assets and infrastructure

☐ Not Applicable

Aligns with core municipal work that falls outside the strategic priorities but improves, maintains, updates and/or protects existing and essential community infrastructure or programs

Community Vision and Official Community Plan

The OCP is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This section identifies how this report applies to the OCP.

Policy A-39, Section 3.0 identifies FFS Guiding Principles including (but not limited to):

Chapter 6: Economic Viability Our Shared Future (partial narrative): facilities, works and services, operations, maintenance levels and community programming including events are an important factor in maintaining the authentic mountain experience. Investments undergo scrutiny to maximize benefit to the resort community and minimize taxpayer impact, ensuring the highest and best use of limited financial, social and natural resources in the long term.

6.4.1.3. Policy Emphasize resourcefulness across the municipality while delivering cost-effective and affordable service excellence.

CHAPTER 8 HEALTH, SAFETY AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

8.1. Goal: Promote, encourage and support initiatives that strengthen the community's sense of place and sense of belonging.

8.1.1. Objective Protect and enhance Whistler's character and sense of place.

8.1.1.1. Policy Support initiatives that preserve and celebrate Whistler's character, sense of place and unique, authentic mountain culture.

8.1.2. Objective Promote and support connections to the natural environment.

8.1.2.2. Policy Promote and encourage a culture of environmental protection and sustainability and living and playing within the community's carrying capacity.

8.6. Goal Create and embed effective governance mechanisms and partnerships to create trust, responsibility and accountability.

8.6.2. Objective Work with partners to achieve mutual benefits.

8.7.2.10. Policy Support responsible animal control, shelter and care through a local shelter program.

CHAPTER 9 LEARNING, CULTURE AND RECREATION

9.2. Goal Support and enhance the growth and vitality of Whistler's Arts, Nature, and Heritage (ANH) sector, including fostering conditions that enable Whistler's ANH sector workers to live and work in the resort community.

9.5.8.5. Policy Continue to collaborate with relevant agencies, user groups, stakeholders, local health authorities and the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation regarding recreational trail management and development issues in Whistler and the Sea to Sky corridor, including the Sea to Sky Trail.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The total amount of the recommended 2024 FFS investments is \$1,272,600 which aligns with the Five-Year Financial Bylaw.

The proposed sources of 2024 FFS funds are:

- MRDT: \$851,760 (2024 allocations include WORCA - \$279,760, Arts Whistler \$572,000)
- RMOW (general tax): \$420,840

In accordance with Policy A-39, FFS funding agreements are subject to the adoption of the annual RMOW budget and Five-Year Financial Bylaw.

Furthermore, FFS funding agreements will include a clause permitting the reduction of funds due to significant and unforeseen revenue shortfall.

LÍŁWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS

The RMOW is committed to working with the LÍŁwat People, known in their language as L'il'wat7úl and the Squamish People, known in their language as the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

All the 2024 applicants mention First Nations alignment, outreach and programming as follows:

SSISC

- In alignment with Chapter 3 of the OCP, the SSISC works directly with the Squamish Nation & LÍŁwat Nation and have well-established collaborative working relationships.

WAG

- In partnership with the LÍŁwat Nation WAG hosts offsite Animal Wellness Clinics which help families who cannot afford regular veterinary care that includes spay and neuter surgeries, parasite control and regular veterinary exams.
- WAG works with the LÍŁwat Nation in the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation to achieve the collective goal of enriching community life through animal welfare and education.
- WAG has successfully completed two Animal Wellness Clinics within the LÍŁwat Nation and have two more planned this Fall.
- Over the past decade WAG has developed a positive working partnership with the LÍŁwat Nation community. This relationship allows WAG to work together to achieve a shared goal of reducing the stray animal population, reducing animal suffering, and positively impacting the local health and safety for animals and human residents.

WORCA

- Specific OCP points that WORCA's services achieve: 9.5.8.5. Policy: Continue to collaborate with relevant agencies, user groups, stakeholders, local health authorities and the Squamish Nation and LÍŁwat Nation regarding recreational trail management and development issues in Whistler and the Sea to Sky corridor.

MUSEUM

- The Museum is important in strengthening the community's sense of place and sense of belonging; this also includes strengthening knowledge and relationships with the Squamish Nation and LÍŁwat Nation.

AW

- AW programs provide opportunities to share the history and culture of the local First Nations and other Indigenous peoples of Canada through visual art, music, lectures, workshops and craft sharing which promotes education, relationship building.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Consistent with Policy A-39 and in accordance with the *Community Charter* Chapter 26, Part 3, the RMOW must provide public notice of its intention to provide assistance by identifying the recipients of the assistance, and describing the nature, term and extent of the proposed assistance. Subject to Council's decision, notices will be placed in the *Pique Newsmagazine* on January 26 and February 2, 2024.

REFERENCES

Appendix A – *Council Policy A-39: Fee For Service*
Appendix B – SSISC 2024 FFS Application
Appendix C – WAG 2024 FFS Application
Appendix D – WORCA 2024 FFS Application
Appendix E – Museum 2024 FFS Application
Appendix F – Arts Whistler 2024 FFS Application

SUMMARY

2023 FFS funding agreements between the RMOW and the five recipient organizations – SSISC, WAG, WORCA, the Museum and AW – concluded on December 31, 2023.

During 2023, RMOW staff reviewed and considered the 2024 FFS funding applications and, subsequent to that review, is recommending 2024 FFS investments as indicated on page two of this report, subject to conditions that will be captured in a FFS agreement with each recipient organization.

SIGN-OFFS

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