



Municipality of North Grenville

To: **Council**

Meeting Date: January 15, 2024

Subject: Proposal to Establish a Mental Health Initiatives Fund

Report No: PRC-2025-001

Prepared by: Tammy Hurlbert, Manager of Community and Leisure Services

Recommendation(s)

THAT Council support the establishment of an annual Mental Health Initiatives Fund;
AND THAT Council pre-approve a \$15,000 allocation for this Fund in the 2025 Budget;
AND THAT Council direct staff to draft a policy for the administration of this fund, including an allowance for related use of municipal facilities, for Council consideration.

Executive Summary

Purpose

- To provide direction to staff regarding the establishment of a Mental Health Initiatives Fund

Key Findings

- There is an appetite among local organizations to promote and expand resources to support mental health in the community, however funding is needed to remove financial barriers to access and to raise awareness.

Financial Implications

- To be reflected in the 2025 Budget, and then annually as approved by Council.

Background/Analysis

Underscored by recent tragedies and challenges in the North Grenville community, it must be acknowledged that our current mental health crisis has been with us for many years. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the crisis while shining a light on the inequities in access to services and supports.

Recent engagement with local health and wellness services and community leaders provided some insight into local challenges and opportunities. It is clear that there is a need for community-led prevention initiatives, and that there is a role for the Municipality to act as a champion and to provide support through communications and resourcing.

The creation of a Mental Health Initiatives Fund is recommended to encourage community-based initiatives which align with the program goal; to strengthen and build capacity for community-based services and individuals through strategies, tools, and training that:

- improve system navigation and reduce barriers to accessing mental health resources;
- increase mental health literacy and skills;
- promote positive mental health; and
- reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

This fund would require a clear administrative policy and process which would need to be addressed quickly in order to respond to the current urgency expressed by the community. The policy should include an allowance for associated requests for use of Municipal facilities.

Relevance to Strategic Priorities

Strategic Pillar	2	A Strong, Connected, and Vibrant Community
Goal	2.1	Strengthen Community Engagement
Key Action	2.1.1	Foster engagement and partnerships among community organizations and leverage benefits of partner organizations, including on organizing events, art and culture, and improving face-to-face and digital town halls etc.

Options and Discussion

1. Approve the recommendation as written.
2. Approve the recommendation, with amendment if Council wishes to change the proposed program budget.
3. Do not approve the recommendation and dismiss the proposal to establish a Mental Health Initiatives Fund.

Financial Impact

This item has been identified in the current budget: Yes No **N/A**

This item is within the budgeted amount: Yes No **N/A**

Staffing implications, as they relate to implementing Council's decision on this matter, are limited to the existing staff complement and applicable administrative policies as approved by Council.

The fund will be included in the 2025 budget, as approved by Council.

Internal/External Consultation

In November, Mayor Peckford partnered with Public Health to host a virtual call with many local Mental Health resources to discuss recent events, with the lens of what role the Municipality might play in supporting mental health in the community.

Communications

If approved, the new program will require communication to make the community aware of the funding guidelines, application process and timeline. Additionally, Municipal tools will be used to assist in raising awareness regarding Mental Health resources and opportunities available within the community.

Attachments

- None