



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Subject: FCSS - CRISIS FUND

Recommendation(s)

1. That the one time Provincial FCSS funding of \$147,027 be allocated to the FCSS Department 2016 base budget, recognizing this fund does not require any matching (80/20) from the Municipality.
2. That the \$147,027 be allocated to the following four investment areas within the FCSS 2016 (special project) budget:
 - a. Suicide and mental health support (\$15,000)
 - b. Neighbourhood Network training and support (\$5,000)
 - c. Asset Development marketing, promotion and education (\$10,000)
 - d. Emergency/crisis/emerging trends support and resources (\$117,027)
3. That Administration provides a slot memo quarterly to Council that provides a summary of any transactions undertaken through the Emergency/Crisis fund allocation.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for FCSS to utilize one-time funding to address four key areas that would otherwise not be addressed due to budget limitations or without having to increase net cost to department.

This funding was provided after the 2016 budget was prepared and is not on-going funding at this time.

Council Direction

N/A

Background and Discussion

Following the preparation of the FCSS 2016 budget, the Provincial FCSS Program announced an additional, one-time grant that did not require matching (80/20) from the Municipality as part of the standard legislative process.

FCSS considered this funding in the context of the Department and community through the lens of immediate needs, but also that of which current funding and resources could not address. Attachment 1: Sampling of Issues/Indicators Putting Stress on the Community, summarizes some of the challenges and strains being experienced by FCSS and our community partners.

In the case of suicide and poor mental health, there is clear evidence in the spike of both in terms of numbers and incidents. A very current stat reveals on average, one suicide attempt per day in St. Albert in the first few months of 2016. We know these are underreported. There is clinical research that illustrates the spike in suicide in poor economic times (Centre for Suicide Prevention).

FCSS has trained staff in both of these areas (suicide and mental health) and offer workshops both skill-based and education to internal and external customers/partners. Funds allocated here would allow the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and the Mental Health First Aid workshops to be offered more in 2016 and at a reduced rate to hopefully reach more people. The more trained, educated and aware community members and partners are the more likely timely resources will be able to reach vulnerable residents of St. Albert.

Investing in training volunteer residents involved in the Neighbourhood Network would not only recognize their invaluable contribution but support the sustainability and passion of their commitment to building community connectedness. Tamarak Institute provides comprehensive training on a range of engagement strategies and models for building abundant communities; the intent of this investment is to have 10 volunteer residents trained to help support the value of Sense of Belonging and Connectedness. The longer term gain is to build capacity in our residents to sustain such initiatives as the block parties, little free libraries and neighbourhood network and potentially spearhead emerging programs such as Neighbourhood Asset Connectors.

Investing \$10,000 in Asset Development would provide the necessary resources to rejuvenate and replenish the 40 Developmental Assets approach including a range of marketing and promotional documents, social media and other communications. The 40 Developmental Assets approach continues to underlie the work we do and with the opening of the Collective, it is timely to enhance the philosophy within the community and further, to branch out to our community partners including the business community. This will also provide a more comprehensive and intentional approach of building assets in the recreation, cultural and leisure organizations (getting to coaches) so would help address bullying as a tertiary but important benefit.

The fourth area of investment (\$117,027), providing crisis support, is more difficult in reality to describe and requires a leap of faith in some regards from Council. There is little to no question that we are currently in an economic downturn that

has exacerbated social issues and created significant stressors in both residents of our community and as well, some of the organizations providing support services to the vulnerable. There is anecdotal and numerical evidence that clearly identifies more individuals and families, from all ages and walks of life, in need of extra supports, and in many cases what could be described as crisis support.

There is a range of situations and scenarios that get presented and too often there is no easy or timely response to respond to such; this just seems to magnify the issue and the actual stress on the individual/family. Although there are some 'crisis type' programs within the community (some relief offered through various churches, Bridge Fund) these are limited in terms of funds, have restrictive guidelines/criteria and are not always available in the immediacy which can be problematic.

The challenge with a "Program" is it becomes limited and restrictive and therefore not always an effective resource to those in need.

Following is a range of scenarios that we, including our community partners, have experienced in the last 6 months that would be prime examples where a flexible, crisis, one-off fund could address in a more timely and impactful way.

1. Homeless youth who did not have the necessary funds to obtain an updated drivers license that would then provide the picture ID he required to process his application for housing (need: less than \$100)
2. A homeless individual that was not able to access clothing vouchers for Salvation Thrift Shop (which is permanently closing in May) and was forced to wear wet shoes causing him to become quite ill (need: approximately \$50)
3. A single mother who was warned by By-Law/Municipal Enforcement to remove unsightly materials from her yard or face a fine, this individual did not have the funds to neither rent a bin or hire someone to do so (as a side note, a PW staff did the removal on his own time and cost to help avoid this expense) (need: less than \$200)
4. Homeless individual working part-time but not in a position to afford initial damage deposit, utility hook-up and rent at their current wage, hours or given reality of additional stressors in their life (need: approximately \$2,000)
5. Families requiring more immediate counselling that may either be deemed intervention/crisis or preventive in nature. Due to wait lists and limitations of certain support/counseling mandates and program criteria, timely support is not always available, the ability to contract a private therapist should an individual or family avail oneself to this is a better option than waiting in

some circumstances. There are some that cannot afford the private route as an option. (need: average \$175/hour)

6. Increase in need for youth counseling through SAIF, contracting additional resources to address the need in the short term (2016) might address the immediate need. (need: approximately \$175/hour, could grant a one time fund of \$5,000 for remainder of 2016)
7. Increase in domestic violence cases as reported by RCMP, additional resources for immediate, safe shelter (hotel) and or additional support services (counseling) (need: wide range, hotel from one night to a week, counseling at \$175/hour approximately)
8. Unforeseen expenses with regards to new immigrants in community (Syrian refugees and language, transportation)
9. Transportation (bus tickets, cab fares etc) for homeless, youth, adults, families and seniors on those 'need it now' cases.

If approved, FCSS will need to work very closely and immediately with our community partners to define and communicate the processes and point of authority that will be needed before distributing any such 'relief/support' to those in need. It will be imperative that clear tracking and accountability measures are developed and implemented to ensure transparency of the disbursements.

One approach may be to define the lines of authority for approval based on the amount of disbursement:

- Under \$500 – no approval necessary, discretionary use
- Between \$500 - \$1,000 – FCSS Directors approval necessary
- Over \$1,000 – SAM (majority) approval necessary (or a group/committee of similar composition)

Processes will have to be established that funds can be released parallel to the 'crisis', same day/time will be essential if the need warrants the same. Some scenarios require more immediate interventions and should be considered when creating the criteria and processes to respond to such.

As indicated in the recommendations, a quarterly slot memo would be provided to Council that provides a summary of any transactions but that would not include any personal information of recipient to ensure their confidentiality.

Stakeholder Communications or Engagement

FCSS consults with community partners on an on-going basis and formerly each year to determine needs of community; included in this is the FCSS Funded

organizations annual reports that provide both anecdotal and numerical evidence of trends and needs in the community.

The Strategy and Mobilization Committee and all the three working groups have met to discuss a 'crisis' fund and what gaps and emerging trends might be addressed and included. There was no shortage of 'scenarios' identified.

In addition to SAM and the working groups, there is an Outreach Group that meets regularly to discuss broad community needs with respect to vulnerable residents and this would be a group that would be consulted on an on-going basis as well.

If approved, the intent of the crisis funding would be taken back to these key stakeholders for further engagement and to help define the parameters and terms of reference (criteria, processes, accountability, tracking, authority etc.).

Implications of Recommendation(s)

The positive implication is that more timely and immediate support can be provided to individuals and families that align to the Social Master Plan values; diversity and inclusion (Homeless), Social Responsibility and Engagement (domestic violence) and Healthy Lifestyle and Well-Being (mental health, supports to seniors, families and youth).

a) Financial:

There is no immediate financial implication as the funding does not require a match from the Municipality. There is a risk potentially in creating the expectation of sustainability once the funds have been expended and are no longer available.

b) Legal / Risk:

- None at this time

c) Program or Service:

- None at this time

d) Organizational:

- In the interim, 2016, this area of responsibility would need to be assigned in consideration of current resources and workloads.

Alternatives and Implications Considered

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternatives could be considered:

- a) Refer back to Administration to amend, as per the general discussion and direction of Council, and present back at a future date.

- b) Take no further action on this matter and apply the one-time funding to the net bottom of the FCSS Department thereby impacting the 2016 net cost.

Strategic Connections

- a) Council's Strategic Outcomes and Priorities (See Policy C-CG-02)
- CULTIVATE A SAFE, HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY: A community that provides opportunities for everyone to realize their potential in a thinking, caring and connected way.
 - Supporting those vulnerable in our community ensures that we remain inclusive in our approach to supporting residents.
- b) Long Term Plans (e.g. MDP, Social Master Plan, Cultural Master Plan, etc.)
- Social Master Plan
 - Cultivating Our Future, St. Albert's Community Vision
- c) Corporate Objectives (See Corporate Business Plan)
- Deliver programs and services that meet or exceed our standards
- d) Council Policies
N/A
- e) Other Plans or Initiatives (Business Plans, Implementation Strategies, etc.)
- N/A

Attachment(s)

Attachment 1: Sampling of Issues/Indicators Putting Stress on the Community

Originating Department(s):	FCSS
Author(s):	Scott Rodda, Director
General Manager Approval:	Chris Jardine, GM, CPS
City Manager Signature:	Date:

Attachment 1: Sampling of Community Stress Issues and Indicators

Community Needs

- Increase in recipients requiring Food Hampers
- Increase in referrals for mental health support (mental illness, addictions)
- Increase in referrals for Family & School Liaison workers
- Increase in 'absolute' homeless
- Increase in number of information and referral consultations
- Increase in number of domestic violence cases
- Increase in number of elder abuse cases
- Increase noted in children, youth and adults with anxiety issues
- Anecdotal observations of increased complexity of 'cases', requiring more support, longer term and more intensive in nature
- Increase in crime such as car thefts and theft under

Community Profile/Context

- Significant economic downturn
- Employment challenges
- Lack of affordable housing options
- Changes in diversity (cultural) of St. Albert resident profile
- Population increased since 2000
 - 2006 Federal Census St. Albert population: 57,764
 - 2011 Federal Census St. Albert population: 61,466
 - 2014 City Municipal Census: St Albert population: 63,255

Service Delivery Growth

- Increase in number of block parties
- Increase in number of programs/initiatives that support and build community connectedness
 - Little Free Libraries
 - Neighbourhood Network
 - Crime Prevention Roundtable and Crime Free Multi Housing
 - Community Cultural Kitchen
- Increase in number of outreach contacts
 - Seniors, youth and families
- Increase in volume of social media education and awareness communications
- Increase in number of committee and planning meetings
- Increase in policy and strategy reports – bullying, homeless, poverty, race and discrimination/diversity and inclusion, housing,
- Increase in issue responses – Hospice Care, Senior Financial Literacy, Senior Housing Forums,
- Implementation of (Youth) Collective, significant service delivery change

- Community partners – increase in referrals, program participants and wait lists for programs/services
- Increase transit ridership (commuter/handibus)
- Increase in # of grants applied for to support growing initiatives / meet funding shortfall
- Increase in # volunteers to support growing service delivery / SMP initiatives (capacity issues)
- Increase in reporting and analysis: capacity building (community) in respect to data collection/integrity, etc.

Impacts

- Strong correlation between unemployment (debt, loss of savings, bankruptcy etc) and poor mental health
- Strong correlation between financial stress and relationship stress
- Strong correlation (research based) between relationship stress, poor mental health and addiction
- Strong correlation (research based) between poor mental health, addiction and suicide
- Strong correlation between mental health, addiction and crime
- Strong correlation between transportation, accessibility and isolation / mental health (seniors)