

Subject:

Multi-Use Recreation Facility Public Engagement Consultant

Recommendation:

THAT a contract with Delaney Engagement Specialists to provide public participation planning services for the Multi-Use Recreation Facility for a contract price of \$9,550.00 be approved.

Background and Description:

At the October 19, 2020 Regular Council Meeting, council passed a resolution to proceed with Stage 3 of the Multi-Use Recreation Facility pending the development and execution of a public engagement strategy and formation of a fundraising committee. Administration has identified a public participation method to engage the public while providing a fully transparent and comprehensive review of the project to date. The public participation strategy would involve the public and stakeholders to gather input, identify concerns and determine the funding strategy and timeline for the Multi-Use Recreation Facility project. The anticipated timeline for the development of the public participation strategy and engagement would be approximately 20-weeks.

Public participation can be any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make sustainable decisions. Public participation is a unique process, separate from communications or a communications strategy, that consists of a series of activities and actions over the lifespan of a project both to inform the public and gain input from them.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a method and model of public participation to be used when planning and conducting public engagement.

Administration will work with a Delaney Engagement Specialists (DES) to apply the IAP2 method to the Multi-Use Recreation Facility project to gather input and engage the public by:

- informing the citizens about the work that council has undertaken to explore a Multi-Use Recreation Facility with a high school to determine how such a facility could meet the needs of the community;
- consulting with the citizens about the scope of the project, how it will meet the needs of user groups, the estimated cost of the current concept plan and funding required to begin construction of the facility; and
- engaging citizens to collectively determine next steps for the community.

In November 2020, administration engaged four companies to provide an estimate or quote for the public participation planning for the Multi-Use Recreation Facility. Of the four companies contacted, one did not reply, and administration held preliminary meetings with the remaining three companies to explain the project, timelines and expectations for the public participation plan. Of the three companies that administration spoke with, DES was the only firm to provide the town with an estimate, attached as Appendix A. Administration is recommending that the contract with DES be approved to meet the proposed timeline for the Multi-Use Recreation Facility public engagement and provide the town with a public participation and communications plan developed by experienced public participation professionals.

DES has over 25 years of experience in public participation and communications. The staff assigned to the Multi-Use Recreation Facility project have worked with various municipal governments and recreation planning projects. Due to a two-week delay in procuring a consultant, the public participation and communications plan will be completed by the week of January 25, 2020 and presented to council for review and acceptance at the proposed February 8, 2020 Regular Council Meeting.

It is important to note that this portion and price of the contract is only for the planning stage of the public participation. This stage will identify the techniques and resources required for the public engagement that will take place in early 2021, including future budget requirements. Future budget requirements will be part of the Multi-Use Recreation Facility Stage 3 capital budget proposed by administration as part of the 2021 Annual Budget.

Following the receipt of the public participation and communications plan in January 2021, there may be an opportunity to extend or enter into an additional contract with DES to conduct the engagement stage of the public participation. Although DES is based in British Columbia, due to COVID-19 they have been increasing their virtual engagement techniques. As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Saskatchewan this experience would be an asset when conducting public engagement in early 2021.

Implications:

- Strategic: Approving the contract with DES will help to achieve the strategic plan's responsive and progressive goal. In particular, it will achieve the objective to have responsible management of the town's financial and other resources, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Financial: The contract price of \$10.0K is not included in the 2020 Annual Budget and therefore requires approval by council. The \$10.0K expenditure will be included as part of the proposed Multi-Use Recreation Facility Stage 3 Capital Project and the 2021 Annual Budget.
- Policy/Legal: Section 159 of *The Municipalities Act* directs that expenditures may only be made if they have been included in the annual budget or are otherwise authorized by council, in cases of emergency or if payment is legally required to be made.
- The town's Purchasing Policy, FIN 001-2017, allows administration to utilize sole source purchasing for goods and services under \$10.0K.
- Communications: If council approves the contract administration will contact DES to finalize the contract for services and begin the public participation and communications planning as soon as possible.



Alternatives:

Extend the Procurement Period

Council may direct administration to reach out to additional companies who may be able to provide a quote or estimate for public participation services. This may delay the public participation and communications portion of the Multi-Use Recreation Facility project further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "V. Colbow".

Voula Colbow, Town Clerk