



Staff Report

Report To: Council

Report From: Jamie Eckenswiller, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
Kodey Hewlett, Corporate and Community Initiatives Officer

Meeting Date: May 16, 2023

Subject: Volunteer Program Policy

Recommendations:

That in consideration of staff report 'Volunteer Program Policy', council approves the Volunteer Program Policy as presented.

Highlights:

- Community involvement is strong in West Grey.
- Former West Grey committee members have noted the advisory committee model does not allow them to volunteer in the ways they would like.
- A volunteer program will allow for a greater number of community members to get involved in varying capacities.
- Shifting from the advisory committee model streamlines volunteer engagement by allowing volunteers to get involved at a tactical level as opposed to a governance level.
- Members of the community who currently volunteer with West Grey will be grandfathered into the volunteer program.

Previous Report/Authority:

None.

Analysis:

Community involvement and engagement is alive and well in West Grey. Previously, West Grey operated with volunteers working under an advisory committee model in which community members who are passionate about getting involved in local governance sat on various advisory committees of council. Advisory committees are a structured way for individual citizens to share their opinions and perspectives, study

issues, and develop recommendations in a focused, small group structure. The primary purpose of advisory committees is to provide advice and recommendations from a citizen perspective to council.

The advisory committee model has historically provided community members with an opportunity to get involved; however, it did not allow for members to get involved with their efforts at a tangible level, such as community beautification or actively engaging in other municipal initiatives.

Through feedback from former committee members, it has become evident that most volunteers did not find the advisory committee of council model requiring agendas, minutes and operating within the boundaries of West Grey's procedural bylaw and other parliamentary procedures to be effective.

Volunteer Program:

To facilitate and encourage contributions from interested volunteers, staff are recommending a new volunteer structure. The Municipality of West Grey shall, through a volunteer program, establish guidelines for staff and volunteers to ensure a safe, meaningful, and productive experience with the Municipality of West Grey. Members of the community who currently volunteer with West Grey will be grandfathered into the program.

In addition to a volunteer program, ad-hoc committees could be created on an as-needed basis to perform a specific task or complete a specific project. Once the task has been completed, the committee would be disbanded. Three recent examples are: the Economic Development Advisory Committee completed its 2021-22 mandate by providing input which is being incorporated into West Grey's draft economic development, tourism, and marketing strategy; the Climate Action Advisory Committee provided extensive input and recommendations that shaped West Grey's corporate climate action plan, and; a Dark Sky lens has been incorporated into the Grey County and West Grey draft Official Plan amendments.

Self-organized community committees:

A self-organized community committee would be individuals who want to organize to discuss certain topics that may generate policy recommendations (such as dark sky or climate action) or organize community events. In these cases, the community committees would organize independently from the municipality and be able to delegate to council to make requests and provide updates on their initiatives. Functioning as a self-organized committee would allow them to operate outside of the formal parliamentary model, meaning they would not be required to create formal agendas and minutes, and would not be subject to quorum restrictions. As with other independent community organizations and service clubs, staff would be available to provide support and guidance as directed by council and through a memorandum of understanding.

Financial Implications:

Former advisory committees that have raised fundraising dollars can delegate council regarding the allocation of those funds.

Communication Plan:

Staff will keep lines of communication open between the municipality and volunteers to ensure that the program is operating successfully. West Grey will review the program periodically and adjust as required.

Consultation:

Chief Administrative Officer

Director of Finance/Treasurer

Manager of Public Works

[The Screening Handbook prepared by Volunteer Canada](#)

Neighbouring municipalities

Town of Cobourg

Halton Hills

Attachments:

Draft Volunteer Program Policy

Recommended by:

Kodey Hewlett

Corporate and Community Initiatives Officer

Jamie Eckenswiller, AMP

Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Submission approved by:

Laura Johnston, Chief Administrative Officer

For more information on this report, please contact Jamie Eckenswiller, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk at clerk@westgrey.com or Kodey Hewlett, Corporate and Community Initiatives Officer at khewlett@westgrey.com or 519-369-2200.