



Staff Report

Finance – Budgets & Accounting

Report To: Council Meeting
Meeting Date: July 15, 2024
Report Number: FAF.24.093
Title: Rural Economic Development Program Agreement – Open Fields Grant
Prepared by: Mike Switzer, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Budgets & Accounting

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.24.093, entitled “Rural Economic Development Program Agreement – Open Fields Grant”;

AND THAT Council approve the authorization for the Mayor and Clerk to execute the contribution agreement.

B. Overview

In early 2024, the Town was successful in an application for the Rural Economic Development Program (RED) to support funding to host a community farm/agriculture familiarization tour. The “Open Fields” project, which held its first successful event in 2023 and drew over 2,000 visitors to five local farms, will provide the public with a behind the scenes look into agriculture practices in the region. This report seeks authorization to execute the contributing agreement.

C. Background

The Town submitted the RED Grant application in 2024 to fund the “Open Fields” project. This project will once again host a community farm/agriculture familiarization tour to the public. Working with the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Town has taken various actions to increase public awareness of common agricultural practices and the importance to support the Agri food value chain in the region. Through the first “Open Fields” event, newsletters and business spotlights, the Town has provided helpful information to the public. Continuing “Open Fields” is a great opportunity to expand this initiative and to invite the public onto local farms to learn about their operations, to experience their products and to ask questions.

D. Analysis

Authorization to execute the contributing agreement will secure grant funding to support the “Open Fields” project.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

F. Environmental Impacts

N/A

G. Financial Impacts

By executing the agreement, the Town will secure \$14,750 in funding towards the project cost of \$29,500.

H. In Consultation With

Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications & Economic Development
Allan Gibbons, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Mike Switzer, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Budgets & Accounting, budgetteam@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Switzer
Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Budgets & Accounting

For more information, please contact:
Mike Switzer, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Budgets & Accounting
budgetteam@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 274

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	FAF.24.093 Rural Economic Development Program Agreement - Open Fields Grant.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jul 11, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Michael Switzer - Jul 11, 2024 - 10:10 AM

Amy Moore - Jul 11, 2024 - 10:44 AM