



# Staff Report

## Operations – Sustainability & Solid Waste

**Report To:** Council Meeting  
**Meeting Date:** June 3, 2024  
**Report Number:** CSOPS.24.044  
**Title:** Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance Follow-up  
**Prepared by:** Nicholas Cloet, Sustainability Coordinator

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### A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.24.044, entitled “Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance Follow-up”;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to execute a Grant Agreement between the Youth Climate Action Fund as represented by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and The Corporation of The Town of The Blue Mountains to receive \$50,000 USD for administration and disbursement of funding for youth-led climate action projects;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to execute an additional Grant Agreement between the Youth Climate Action Fund and The Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains to receive the additional \$100,000 USD of YCAF funding, in the event the \$50,000 USD allocation is distributed to eligible projects by September 30, 2024 and if a new Grant Agreement is required;

AND THAT, with respect to the requirement for establishment of “The Blue Mountains Youth Climate Action Fund Project Team”, as recommended in the within staff report, Council confirms the composition of The Blue Mountains Youth Climate Action Fund Project Team as follows:

1. Mayor Matrosovs
2. Member of Council (to be named)
3. Member of Council (to be named)
4. Sustainability Coordinator of the Town of The Blue Mountains
5. Communications and Economic Development Coordinator of the Town of The Blue Mountains
6. Public Member (to be appointed by Council following the call for applications)
7. Public Member (to be appointed by Council following the call for applications);

AND THAT staff are authorized to launch The Blue Mountains Youth Climate Action Fund application forms and guidance for applicants based on YCAF program templates along with essential promotions to facilitate the launch.

## **B. Overview**

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This report addresses questions and concerns raised by Council regarding [CSOPS.24.038 Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance](#) at the May 13, 2024 Council meeting and is coming directly to Council as it is time sensitive.

## **C. Background**

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On March 20, 2024, the Town was notified that it had been accepted into the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) program funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies with support from its partners at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The Blue Mountains staff, including the Sustainability Coordinator, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, and acting Director of Finance met with the Mayor to outline a budget (\$41,000 USD for grants and an estimated \$9,000 to cover Town expenses) for submission to RPA and to discuss next steps in preparing for the program. The YCAF program announced the list of successful participating communities on April 10, 2024 and The Blue Mountains released a Public Notice on April 11, 2024 echoing this announcement and launched a website with basic program information at [www.thebluemountains.ca/YCAF](http://www.thebluemountains.ca/YCAF). Subsequent meetings between the Town and Grey County staff secured the assistance of County climate change staff for advisory, program delivery and promotional support.

On May 13, 2024, staff report CSOPS.24.038 Youth Climate Action Fund Acceptance requested Council's authorization for the Mayor and Clerk to sign a Grant Agreement with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors for a \$50,000 USD disbursement for the Youth Climate Action Fund. Council did not provide authorization, and the motion passed by Council in this meeting is as follows:

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.24.038, entitled "Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance" and direct staff to provide a further staff report directly to the June 3, 2024 Council Agenda, to include:

1. representation on the municipal project team, including municipal Council members, staff and community members;
2. the ability to remove the reference to intellectual property from the agreement;
3. legal and financial opinion on receiving funds from a charitable foreign entity;
4. a list of other Canadian towns and cities included in this program.

In order to respond to the numbered directions in the May 13<sup>th</sup> motion, Town staff sought a legal opinion, in addition to clarification from YCAF representatives and analyzed the Grant Agreement and other program details. Answers to items 1, 2, and 3 are provided in the Analysis section of this report.

The answer to item #4, a list of other Canadian town and cities included in the YCAF program, was included on page 3 of the May 13<sup>th</sup> staff report, as follows: Guelph, Halifax, Kitchener, New Westminster, and Oakville.

## **D. Analysis**

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The Grant Agreement includes a list of required steps for the Grantee (Town of The Blue Mountains) to accomplish:

- Establish the city's Youth Climate Action Fund program team.
- Create a microgrant application process to identify, select, and fund youth-led climate projects that are aligned with the city's top climate challenges as identified in its climate action plan and/or proposal to the Youth Climate Action Fund.
- Promote the microgrant application widely, starting with a call to action from the mayor, to ensure that youth-led organizations from across the city are proposing projects that they want to bring to life with support from the city's Youth Climate Action Fund program.
- Select successful applicants and award microgrants of USD \$1,000-\$5,000 to support selected projects.
- Collaborate with microgrant recipients to track project progress through at least one output and one outcome (where an output indicates work in progress, and an outcome demonstrates the impact).
- Engage other city leaders, relevant municipal agencies, and essential community partners in disseminating the project's results to the broader resident community.

The Youth Climate Action Fund also has several key dates that the Town is expected to abide by as shared with the Mayor and Town staff:

- June 1, 2024: YCAF requested that participating communities launch their programs on or before this date to provide program guidance and start receiving eligible microgrant proposals;
- September 30, 2024: hard deadline to provide microgrants to successful youth-led project applications;
- December 31, 2024: hard deadline for all funds to be spent by microgrant recipients;
- January 31, 2025: deadline for microgrant recipients to submit grant reports to the Town;
- The Grant Agreement also includes February 28, 2025 as a hard deadline for the Town to submit a final report outlining "all narrative and financial elements outlined within the report form" provided in the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors' online portal. This will include copies of reports from microgrant recipients received by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

The YCAF timeline above required pre-approval promotional efforts, which began with the Public Notice on April 11, 2024, and continued with social media and direct correspondence with interested youth-supporting organizations. Promotional efforts including the Town's Public Notice and social media posts have reached youth-supporting organizations across TBM YCAF eligible area, identified as the traditional territory of Saugeen Ojibway Nation (including Grey County, Southern Georgian Bay, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation, and more) which as of May 23, 2024 resulted in 15 subscribers to the Town's YCAF website awaiting further updates. Promotional efforts championed by Grey County staff so far have included sharing a simple poster at: Earth Day Grey Bruce (April 20, 2024); Grey Sauble Earth Film Festival (May 16, 2024 in Owen Sound, reaching roughly 150 high

school students); 27 local educator, school board and Georgian College contacts; and at The Blue Mountains and Area Sustainability Summit. The Mayor and staff also took opportunities to inform First Nations Chiefs and the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre of the opportunity. Staff also presented to Georgian Bay Youth Roots on May 9, 2024 with information available at the time and received questions. Excitement and curiosity about eligibility and program submission guidance are building in anticipation of this opportunity, and the tight timeline involved leads to this report's recommendation that authorization be granted to the Mayor and Clerk to accept the funds, enabling the formal launch of the program to share requirements and start accepting eligible microgrant proposals.

### **Representation on the Municipal Project Team**

It is recommended that Council appoint up to two Council members to join the Mayor and Town staff on the Municipal Project Team. Information reports at key checkpoints will be provided to Council – suggested as after September 30<sup>th</sup> to outline grant allocation metrics and projects in-progress, and in February 2025 to provide all Councilors with the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the progress and results of TBM YCAF.

Once the Town is authorized by Council to accept the \$50,000 USD disbursement from the YCAF program as recommended by this report, the Town will be responsible for providing a submission form, guidance to applicants, selecting successful projects and distributing funds to successful proponents. With the timeline provided earlier in this Analysis, it is highly recommended that Council enable The Blue Mountains YCAF to launch as soon as possible. The Town's communications staff can arrange for proposal intake forms and guidance to become available on the Town's website ([www.thebluemountains.ca/YCAF](http://www.thebluemountains.ca/YCAF)) as early as June 4, 2024.

In webinars with other North American community participants held in May 2024 so far, representatives of YCAF communicated an expectation with all participating communities that they should launch their programs on or before June 1, 2024. Given the timeline noted above, it is recommended that TBM YCAF be launched as soon as possible with materials that are already prepared by staff based on templates provided by the YCAF program to all participating communities.

The Municipal Project Team can optionally involve a small number of community partner representatives as well. Climate Action Now Network is a local climate advocacy group that could be invited to provide an individual, provided CANN will not be supporting or endorsing specific youth-led or youth-supporting microgrant applications. Members of the Municipal Project Team, and most importantly those participating on a future Selection Committee to identify successful proposals, must not be involved with organizations seeking YCAF funds to avoid a potential conflict of interest. Grey County climate change staff are already collaborating with Town staff and may also be tapped to participate on the Selection Committee as projects will need to show alignment with TBM Future Story and/or Going Green in Grey. Invitations to specific organizations and/or consideration of expressions of interest from community organizations to participate in this manner can be considered by the Council and staff members of the Municipal Project Team.

## Legal and Financial Matters

With respect to item #2 in the May 13<sup>th</sup> motion, a clause within the Grant Agreement referring to intellectual property was a cause of concern among some members of Council as it was perceived as a risk to youth-created intellectual property (inventions, creative works). The Section 5 clause text is as follows:

5. Intellectual Property; Grant of License. The Grantee hereby transfers and assigns to RPA a worldwide, irrevocable, perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to disseminate and sublicense any research, writing, study, publication, report, invention, patent, trademark, service mark, audio or video program, film, or other media product developed by the Grantee pursuant to this Agreement for RPA's charitable and educational purposes.

Notable in this clause is that it applies to "The Grantee", which is defined on page 1 of the Grant Agreement as Town of The Blue Mountains. The intellectual property clause therefore applies only to the Town of The Blue Mountains and does not directly impact youth. Staff interpreted the Section 5 clause to mean that YCAF has unrestricted use of reporting that the Town will provide outlining how funds have been spent, the progress made and outcomes of projects, and any pictures or multimedia the Town produces to promote, recognize or celebrate the results of TBM YCAF. This interpretation was confirmed as technically correct in the May 22, 2024 legal opinion, however it was recommended that the Town confirm with RPA that the intent of the clause is indeed meant to apply only to the Town and not to third-parties (i.e. microgrant recipients) to avoid the potential for any future dispute. This inquiry was sent to RPA and a representative responded to confirm that Section 5 does indeed apply only to the Town. In the words of the RPA representative:

"Section 5 grants you a license from RPA for our use of the IP for charitable and educational purposes. In practical terms, you're granting a license to the Youth Climate Action Fund project team in case they repost, republish, otherwise promote your work, etc. (always with attribution)."

The legal opinion also identified that this clause is part of a standard agreement most likely received in an identical format by all other YCAF participants. Given the purpose of this clause, and the response from YCAF program, removing this clause as suggested in the May 13<sup>th</sup> motion is not recommended. Attempting to remove this clause would lead to further delays and would not enhance protections for youth, which was the area of concern raised by Council. The Town's Municipal Project Team can ensure that necessary reporting to YCAF does not share any proprietary or personal information to protect the best interests of youth applicants and participants. As the Town receives microgrant applications and youth-supporting organizations begin to engage with the Town and with youth, similar oversight of any Town promotions, website content, and other materials will ensure youth are protected while meeting YCAF program requirements.

With respect to item #3 in the May 13<sup>th</sup> motion, the Town's former Acting Director of Finance and his staff ensured all relevant documents pertaining to financial matters were reviewed and

submitted, which led to the Grant Agreement first being sent to the Town for a signature on April 29, 2024. The Acting Director of Finance reconfirmed for this staff report that there is no detail within any Town policy that would prevent the Town from accepting a grant from a foreign charity.

A legal opinion on item #3 was also sought, and similarly, there is no perceived technical reason that a grant from a foreign charitable organization could not be accepted, provided the terms of the Grant Agreement are acceptable.

Regarding item #4, a list of other Canadian municipalities included in the YCAF was included in the Background section above. It should be noted that as of writing this staff report, City of Guelph has already launched their YCAF application form along with guidance for applicants on their website: <https://guelph.ca/city-hall/budget-and-finance/grant-applications/youth-climate-action-fund-micro-grant-program/>

While not included in the motion, the discussion on May 13<sup>th</sup> also touched on whether the YCAF program partners are lobbyists with the federal government. In a search of the federal government's Registry of Lobbyists, an Advanced Registry Search did not reveal any lobbying by "Bloomberg Philanthropies", "Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors", or "United Cities and Local Governments". Searches for "Bloomberg" and "Rockefeller" revealed lobbying associated with the University of Toronto and NBC Universal, respectively, dated from 2021 and older, perhaps associated with parent companies or other subsidiaries (not those involved in the YCAF program). These search results do not appear relevant to government-level decision making in Canada. Keyword searches on Ontario's Office of the Integrity Commissioner Lobbyist Registry similarly did not generate results that would appear relevant to government-level decision making in Ontario.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **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**

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The benefits of youth-led climate change projects were described in the May 13 Staff Report CSOPS.24.038 Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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The financial impacts of accepting the YCAF grant were outlined in the May 13 Staff Report CSOPS.24.038 Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance. As described in the Analysis section above, there is no policy that would preclude the Town from accepting a grant from a foreign charitable organization.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Sam Dinsmore, Acting Director of Finance (former)

Amy Moore, Manager of Revenue (Acting Treasurer)

## **I. Public Engagement**

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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. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Nicholas Cloet, Sustainability Coordinator [sustainability@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:sustainability@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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None

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Cloet  
Sustainability Coordinator

Jeffery Fletcher,  
Acting Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:  
Nicholas Cloet, Sustainability Coordinator  
[sustainability@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:sustainability@thebluemountains.ca)  
519-599-3131 extension 235

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	CSOPS.24.044 Youth Climate Action Fund Grant Acceptance Follow-up.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 27, 2024

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

**Jeff Fletcher - May 27, 2024 - 3:33 PM**

**No Signature - Task assigned to Alan Pacheco was completed by delegate Jeff Fletcher, in his role as Acting Director of Operations.**

**Jeff Fletcher - May 27, 2024 - 3:35 PM**