



Staff Report

Community Services

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: June 9, 2025
Report Number: CS.25.031
Title: Draft Subsidy Policy Report
Prepared by: Aaron McMullen, Manager of Recreation Facilities and Building Maintenance

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CS.25.031, entitled "Draft Subsidy Policy Report";

AND THAT Council confirms the age of youth as aged 17 or under;

AND THAT Council confirms the criteria for delegated authority;

AND THAT Council confirms the exclusions list;

AND THAT Council direct staff to review the draft policy with impacted groups.

B. Overview

This report is being presented to Council with a draft subsidy policy attached. Staff are seeking direction or clarity on some elements of the policy that will allow staff to share a draft policy with user groups for feedback.

C. Background

The Town of The Blue Mountains serves as a recreational hub for both community members and visitors of all ages. Historically, consistent with industry standards in recreation, youth have traditionally been the primary beneficiaries of Council-approved subsidies.

In 2014, after the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario adjusted its rules and regulations, the Beaver Valley Community Centre saw a decline in its appeal for hosting alcohol-related events. This downturn in facility rentals motivated staff to devise innovative strategies for increasing rental revenue, rebranding the facility as a multi-purpose venue emphasizing healthy and active living while still offering space for special events. To attract groups and programs, the Centre introduced a 1-year, 30% program subsidy intended to help programs establish themselves. However, the subsidy persisted during budget deliberations, diverging from its original intent as a temporary measure.

Given the numerous subsidies available for both youth and adults, accompanied by yearly requests to Council for fee relief or additional subsidies, Council instructed staff to formulate a corporate subsidy policy to ensure consistency and accountability to the community's taxpayers.

D. Analysis

The analysis details the existing subsidy process and collects neighboring communities and industry data to formulate the attached draft subsidy policy. At present, subsidies are allocated across various groups and age demographics without benchmarking against nearby communities or industry norms. The following is a list of subsidies allocated through the 2025 annual budget:

Facility	User Group	Category	Subsidy Rate
Beaver Valley Community Centre	Youth Sport	Youth	45%
Beaver Valley Community Centre	Municipal Programs (Parent and Tot, Senior Walking Group)	All Ages	100%
Craigleith Community Centre	AA	Adult	100%- \$20 donation
Moreay Park - Baseball	Youth Sport	Youth	30%
Tomahawk Soccer	Youth Sport	Youth	30%
Outdoor Tennis/Indoor and Outdoor Pickleball	Numerous Groups	Adult	10%

The Town offers a variety of subsidy rates for different recreational programs, as illustrated. Staff have contacted neighboring communities to gather comparable subsidy data, and the results are detailed below:

Municipality	Youth Subsidy Offered	Adult Subsidy
Town of Collingwood	Reduced Rate - No subsidy	Not Offered
Municipality of Meaford	Yes - 45% off prime rates	Not offered
Municipality of Grey Highlands	Yes - 25% off prime rates	Not Offered
Municipality of West Grey	Yes - 25% off prime rates	Not Offered

As illustrated above, there is a consistent approach among neighboring communities to offer subsidies or reduced rates to youth only in their recreational fees and charges. This aligns with the industry standard observed in Community Services and Recreation Departments within neighboring communities. Many communities offer financial relief for adult programming through organizations or groups such as Beaver Valley Outreach and the Grants and Donations Advisory Committee.

Beaver Valley Outreach

Certain communities in South-Western Ontario have established support organizations similar to the Beaver Valley Outreach, which offers financial assistance to families or individuals interested in participating in local recreational programs. The Beaver Valley Outreach offers two distinct funding streams: Recreational Funding and Adult Funding. The following outlines the offerings of each program along with the criteria that groups or individuals must satisfy:

Recreational Funding

The term “recreation” is used in its broadest sense and includes, but is not limited to, sports, cultural activities, music lessons, school trips and tutoring for youth. This fund is administered by the Beaver Valley Outreach Executive Director on an individual basis.

Criteria – Any parent of a child 18 years of age and under who resides within the Town of the Blue Mountains can apply for funding. Funding is available to households whose gross combined income is \$50,000 or less. The maximum available funding per child is \$400 per calendar year. Applicants are asked to contribute 10% per child per activity.

Adult Funding

This is a smaller fund than Recreational Funding, also administered by the Beaver Valley Outreach Executive Director on an individual basis. The purpose of Adult Funding is to assist adults in much the same way as the Recreational Funding for youth. For example: an individual might need a fishing license, materials for a course, work boots, or a tune up of their bike as it may be their main mode of transportation.

Criteria – Any adult over the age of 18 who resides within the Town of the Blue Mountains can apply for the funding. Funding is available to households whose gross annual income is \$50,000 or less. The maximum available funding per adult is \$400 per calendar year. Applicants are asked to contribute 10% of the requested amount of funding.

Grants and Donations Advisory Committee

The Grants and Donations Advisory Committee is a committee of Council mandated to:

- a) Be engaged, consulted, and comment as one common voice, and provide recommendations on how best to distribute available funding that has been applied for through the Town’s Grant and Donation Program.
- b) Be the lead, or partner with a community partner(s), to host or be a partner in fundraising events, fundraising programs, and or fundraising activities with the endorsement and approval of Council for the specific event, program, and activity by way of a formal resolution of Council.

Once per calendar year or during the annual budget cycle, the Grants and Donations Advisory Committee accepts applications to offer financial assistance to local groups and organizations.

This support is delivered via cash grants, capped at a maximum of \$500 per application in 2025, as well as Subsidies.

Delegated Authority

Delegating authority to the Director of Community Services or designate for handling historical requests previously approved by Council will streamline resources and reduce burdens on both Council and staff for recurring financial relief related to facility rentals, fees, charges, and the use of Town-owned resources. Historical groups that have previously presented to Council include but are not limited to:

School Groups

Agricultural Society

Health and Wellness Groups or Organizations

Fundraising Groups

Athletic Groups

Not-for-profit and Charitable Organizations

Adult Subsidies

Adult groups or organizations that previously received a subsidy through the Town's annual budget, specifically under the fees and charges bylaw, will no longer be allocated a percentage subsidy. However, these groups will continue to access current rental rates that incorporate the subsidy. These rates will be reviewed and potentially adjusted annually as part of the Town's budget preparation process. For example, if a user group pays \$20/hr and receives a 10% subsidy, staff are recommending that the 2026 fee will be \$18/hr. Moving forward, all fees will be subject to annual review through the fees and charges by law and standard inflation rates may be considered or as otherwise directed by Council.

Defining Youth

For the purposes of the "draft subsidy policy", 'youth' will be defined as individuals aged 17 or under unless otherwise identified through Governed Youth Programming. Local athletic associations within the Blue Mountains operate under their respective governing bodies, which define the youth category. For example:

The Georgian Shores Minor Hockey Association is governed by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, offering hockey programs for individuals up to 20 years old.

The Beaver Valley Athletic Association is governed by Baseball Ontario, providing baseball programs for ages 21 and under.

Based on the information gathered from neighboring communities and the financial assistance available through the Beaver Valley Outreach and the Grants and Donation Advisory Committee, staff recommend that only local youth subsidies be funded through the Town's annual Municipal budget.

Preliminary communication has taken place with stakeholders, staff are seeking guidance on some elements and preliminary endorsement in principle of the draft policy to begin formal consultation with impacted groups.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

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

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

None at this time

G. Financial Impacts

To be determined when policy elements are confirmed

H. In Consultation With

Ryan Gibbons, Director of Community Services

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. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Aaron McMullen, Manager of Recreation Facilities and Building Maintenance amcmullen@thebluemountains.ca.

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J. Attached

1. Draft Subsidy Policy

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron McMullen
Manager of Recreation Facilities and Building Maintenance

For more information, please contact:
Aaron McMullen, Manager of Recreation Facilities and Building Maintenance
amcmullen@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 340

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CS.25.031 Draft Subsidy Policy Report.docx
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature found

Aaron McMullen - May 30, 2025 - 4:34 PM

Ryan Gibbons - Jun 2, 2025 - 8:17 AM