

Request for Decision

Field House Booking Policies

Presented To: Community Services
Committee

Presented: Monday, Apr 03, 2017

Report Date Wednesday, Mar 15,
2017

Type: Referred & Deferred
Matters

Resolution

WHEREAS the report to Council presented on Monday, January 16, 2017, titled Field House Booking Policies was deferred for the purpose of consulting with neighbourhood associations to review proposed changes to booking practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury implement the recommendations identified in the report dated March 15, 2017 from the General Manager of Community Development;

AND THAT a clear communication plan be put in place to ensure volunteers are fully trained on new policies and procedures relating to field house bookings.

Finance Implications

The recommendations outlined in the report will increase the workload of Lead Facility Booking/Registration Clerk as all field house bookings will be tracked through the Leisure Program and Facility booking software. Field house bookings have not been tracked in the past, and consequently the total impact on workload is not known but work will be redistributed to enable the recommended policies and procedures to be implemented.

If approved, revenues generated from field house bookings would be granted back to the neighborhood associations.

Health Impact Assessment

The proposed changes within this report are intended to set up a standardized process for all volunteer groups that operate field houses on behalf of the City of Greater Sudbury. This recommendation will positively support existing City of Greater Sudbury volunteers and community groups to utilize local facilities

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Health Impact Review

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Division Review

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Recommended by the Department

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Recommended by the C.A.O.

Ed Archer
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at no cost or affordable rates for meetings/gatherings and other local fund raising events and programs.

Executive Summary

In mid 2016, an evaluation of the fee collection processes at neighbourhood field houses was undertaken through the collaboration of the Leisure Services and Finance departments. It was determined that there were a number of pre-existing practices that are not compliant with City of Greater Sudbury Finance policies.

The Field House Booking Policies report to Community Services committee on January 16, 2017 was deferred in order to ensure community consultation was undertaken regarding the draft process to review the potential impact to volunteers and user groups, to create user definitions, and to verify acceptable user fees, as requested by Council.

Background and Current Status

User Fee By-Law Definitions:

Community group/not for profit – means a group, sole proprietorship or unincorporated association which is intended for non-profit.

Commercial/private – means a corporation, sole proprietorship, partnership or unincorporated association, or individual that hosts an event that is intended for profit or closed to the public.

Volunteer Consultation

As per the direction of the January 16, 2017 Community Services Committee meeting, neighbourhood association presidents who volunteer at municipally owned field houses were contacted regarding the booking of their facilities. The following information was gathered from those who responded to questions regarding the types of groups who utilize their field houses, the frequency of usage, whether a fee/donation was charged/provided, and comments and concerns regarding this new process.

1. There was a relatively even split of usage been private and community rentals that varied between locations. The frequency of usage varied greatly by location and appeared to be relative to the amount of volunteer support specific to the neighbourhood association. Frequency varied from a few rentals per year to 40 rentals per year with most being less than 10. Specific usage included birthday parties, baby showers, IODE, school groups, CANs, sports groups, and community groups such as Rainbow Routes. There is also neighborhood usage such as euchre tournaments and other drop in activities.
2. As anticipated, there was a large variation on fees charged/donations provided. Most neighborhood associations did not charge any fee or garner donations. When fees/donations were accepted, the fee/donation ranged between \$0 and \$100.00. Further comments from the volunteers suggested that it should remain affordable to ensure usage continues. It is also clear that partnerships exist between the neighborhood volunteers and other community groups and this process should not negatively impact these partnerships.
3. In response to how much volunteer time is allocated to cleaning the facility, the result was reflective of usage. Most responses ranged from 1-2 hours per week and noted the support of the Outdoor Rink Supervisors as well. It was also noted that community groups using the building were expected to clean up after themselves as much as possible.

Concerns expressed during consultations were as follows:

- No separate or secure lockup for equipment or personal gear left on site, concerned about damage to building.

- Key distribution and collection.
- Ensuring existing partnerships continue regarding local community groups who use the field houses (at no charge) for the benefit of the community.
- Will amount of volunteer work increase? It may be too much work for no difference in revenue.
- Might be losing the personal touch.
- Will fees be too high for low income users?
- Too many people co-coordinating, why can't the City of Greater Sudbury just book it?
- Communication needs to be strong.
- After hours phone calls.
- Travel time for renters to the Citizen Service Centre.
- Logistics (payments, bookings, keys, details).
- Can it be done on line?
- Need a written process and checklist.
- Bureaucracy
- Might lose bookings.
- If neighborhood association wants to hold an event, does it have to be booked?
- This process should be left entirely with volunteers – less complications and red tape.

Upon implementation of these changes, clear communication of the updated process, to both the public and the volunteers will be crucial. This change is not anticipated to create more work for volunteers and likely will not create a large amount of new facility bookings. Instead, the new process will manage the existing bookings within compliance of the user fee by-law and requirements of the cash handling protocols for the City of Greater Sudbury. As suggested by volunteers, many existing users will continue to use the facilities at no charge and reasonable fees will be charged for non-profit users when they are fundraising. There is strong commitment to the existing partnership with volunteers to continue and strengthen the relationship, through clear and transparent protocols that are consistent across the City of Greater Sudbury.

Feedback regarding potential positive outcomes of this change:

- More revenue for the neighborhood association to reinvest in the site with consistency across the CGS.
- Easier and more transparent, accountability for renters.
- Better perception by the public that sites are being utilized, more awareness and promotion.
- More money to support programming on site.
- Better visibility for the field houses – the increased traffic will benefit and hopefully deter any future vandalism.
- Field houses are for the community.
- Less handling for the association is easier.
- No negative impact as long as the communication with the association is prompt and accurate.
- Process would streamline the use of the facility and assist with the transfer of funds.

Fees

Existing fees for Community Groups, non-profit, and minor sports – no alcohol:

One Day	\$79.00
Monthly Rate (up to 5 uses)	\$157.00
Annual Rate - 12 times per year	\$326.00
Annual Rate - Unlimited	\$431.00

From feedback received, all agree that it is imperative that incidental usage of and by non-profit and community groups of local field houses should continue at no charge, specifically for meetings and non financial purposes (euchre tournaments, local minor sports groups etc.). The generally accepted fee for fundraising or revenue generating events for community groups/non-profit groups was \$50 per day and the subsequent monthly and annual rates. It is recommended that any activity of a private/corporate nature should incur a user fee.

Proposed Fee Schedules:

Community Groups, non-profit and minor sports – meetings and non-financial purposes - no charge

Community Groups, on-profit and minor sports – fundraising or revenue generating event

One Day	\$50.00
Monthly Rate (up to 5 uses)	\$157.00
Annual Rate (12 uses per year)	\$326.00
Annual Rate (unlimited)	\$431.00

Commercial/Private - \$75.00 per day

Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy include facilities that are provided an annual grant to operate as they are non-owned municipal buildings that provide recreational opportunities to the community. They include:

- Wahnapiatae Community Centre
- Skead Community Centre
- Penage Road Community Centre
- Beaver Lake Community Centre
- Carol Richard Park

There are various other locations including O'Connor Park (Better Beginnings, Better Futures) and Victory Park (Myths and Mirrors) where groups are / will be governed by formal agreements, this policy will not apply, as the terms and conditions allow these groups to continue as per their agreement.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a field house booking policy be developed based on the feedback received from the neighborhood volunteers, the content of this report and the requirements set out within the City of Greater Sudbury User Fee By-law and the City finance policies.

As part of new processes, rental fees would be collected by the City at Citizen Service Centres, in order to comply with City cash handling policies.

Further, it is recommended that all funds collected through field house rentals that are managed by volunteers be granted to the neighbourhood associations on a quarterly or semi-annual basis, as required.

It is also recommended that the City of Greater Sudbury User Fee By-law be amended to reflect the proposed fee schedules contained in this report and that the communication plan that began in 2016 will continue to be built upon. If approved, a spring meeting will be scheduled with neighborhood volunteers to introduce the process, with full implementation and compliance to follow.

Conclusion

These recommendations will increase transparency and provide a higher level of accountability and consistency regarding funds collected at neighborhood field houses, while ensuring compliance with City finance policies and the Annual User Fee by-law. Consulting with the neighborhood association volunteers garnered valuable feedback that ensures a positive outcome of this new protocol.

Next Steps

Upon approval of this report, the associated recommendations will be implemented, including a clear communication process with all neighbourhood association volunteer groups in spring 2017.

References

City of Greater Sudbury User Fee By-Law 2017-24

(<http://www.greatersudbury.ca/inside-city-hall/by-laws/pdf-documents/user-fee-2017-24/>)