

Report to: the Finance and Administration Committee
Report from: Beaver Valley Outreach
Subject: BVO and Town Funding
Date: August 15, 2011

B.1

Background

The staff report to the Finance and Administration Committee on July 26, 2011, outlined a new evaluation formula for funding requests from not-for-profit community groups and business associations. BVO has looked at both the old and the proposed new criteria, noting the following:

1. BVO has certainly demonstrated managerial expertise and good financial management. We run 22 programs, our 8 person staff will soon be augmented by our daycare employees, we have a building and a reserve fund for future repairs, we run a successful store which recycles a vast amount of material that might otherwise find its way to the dump, and in 2013 we will celebrate our 30th anniversary.
2. BVO makes a unique contribution to the quality of life in our community. An excellent example of BVO's contribution occurred recently when the Beaver Valley Preschool dissolved. If BVO had not been there to fill the gap when the preschool closed, many families in our community would have been without the daycare that allowed parents to work to support their families. Time and again we hear how important it is to the future of this community to keep young families in the area, and studies show that most families rely on income from both parents to meet expenses. If we want to attract new families and keep the ones we have, along with our local school, we need daycare. BVO has responded by becoming the operators of the new BVO Preschool and will be employing a minimum of 5 new staff.
3. All of BVO's programs, services and events are located in, and run for the benefit of our community. We are not a service club or single focus not-for-profit organization. We are a grass roots organization with no higher level financial commitments outside this community. All our grants and donations flow back into this community. Note that our sole purpose, as stated in the short version of mission statement, is "to make good things happen in the Town of The Blue Mountains".
4. BVO brings money into the community from both Grey County and the province. Because we run children's programs, we receive staff subsidies, and we receive grants to help with recreational funding and emergency services.
5. BVO's programs, services and events align with all of the Town endorsed plans mentioned in the report. Many of the tourists who come up for the Thanksgiving weekend tell us that our Annual Silent Auction is big draw for them. We have recently renovated our building to make it more accessible, energy efficient and attractive inside and out; we also take great care to deal promptly with the drop offs so that our area is as tidy as possible. Many of the goals and objectives for community and social services found in Our Sustainable Path came from BVO representatives on two of the committees. In its Strategic Plan, the Town emphasizes "strong partnerships to provide sustainable services into the future" as a way to realize its vision. The Town could not ask for a stronger or more caring partner than BVO, and for that reason we are making the following proposal.

Proposal

BVO is in a unique position to assist Council and staff with its work because both of our mission statements are geared towards the same end – the present and future welfare of the Town of the Blue Mountains. We also know better than most the effects of our current economic climate on families and individuals in this community. Our proposal involves a partnership between us that has advantages for both parties.

We would like you to release us from the necessity of applying for funding every year, and to grant us in-kind use of the Community Centre for the 4 main programs that we run in that building on an ongoing basis. In return, well in advance of your budget process, we would provide the dates we would need, and copies of our annual Notice to Reader or other documentation you might require.

The following are the programs and events for which we are seeking in-kind help:

Good Food Box

This program does not generate revenue for us. We run it to encourage good nutrition and pass on savings to families and individuals in our community. One Wednesday a month, except for July and August, BVO purchases fresh fruit and vegetables in bulk from our partner, Foodland. Volunteers pack them into \$8 and \$15 sizes and distribute them at our pick-up location in the small room of the Community Centre. This service, for which BVO also absorbs administrative costs for registration, has become very popular, with about 60 families and individuals participating in the savings.

Easter Eggstravaganza

This is truly a transgenerational community event with fun-filled activities free to all. Last year over 200 families participated. BVO invites our local not-for-profit partners to attend; last year the library, the agricultural society and the girl guides were able to showcase their programs and next year Rotary will join us.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner

Attendance for this event, for which we require both the large and small rooms, has grown from 25 people 15 years ago, to about 900 last year. We now have 3 sittings for what has become for many, a traditional family event. We have also been pleased to see a growing number of agricultural workers among the diners. This event is not a fund raiser, though we do receive donations from those who feel so inclined. This money flows directly into children's programming.

Community Silent Auction

We acknowledge that this event is a fund raiser; in fact, it is our major fund raiser. The success of our auction is one of the reasons that we can avoid continuously going around the community soliciting funds. However, the Auction as noted above, is also a major tourist draw, hence its inclusion in the Apple Harvest Festival on Thanksgiving weekend. A huge amount of work goes into canvassing for and artfully displaying an impressive array of items to tempt a wide variety of potential bidders. Last year we offered over 740 items to 407, many of whom were out of towners who return each year just to attend the auction. Once here, they then take part in other Apple Harvest activities.

Using our most recent application for Town funding, the total in-kind cost (rounded up) to the Town for these programs and events would be:

Good Food Box	\$1050.00
Easter Eggstravaganza	\$ 530.00
Thanksgiving Dinner	\$ 530.00
Silent Auction	<u>\$3500.00</u>
Total	\$5600.00

You will notice two things: one, this amount is less, not more than the grant you gave us last year; two, we are no longer asking for in-kind assistance when we hold our AGM, our Good Things Gala, or any other function that is strictly a fund raiser, or does not lend itself to a broad spectrum of community involvement. We are also not asking for advertising subsidies for any of our programs or events, in keeping with your proposed "fund operational costs only" policy.

Rationale – ie, why is BVO proposing this arrangement

1. Efficiency in planning: The current application process costs BVO time and money in the yearly preparation of our application. We fill in the same background information every year and we ask for basically the same thing every year. We would find it helpful to our budgeting and planning process if we knew we could count on in-kind use of the community centre for the Good Food Box, the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Easter Eggstravaganza and the Community Silent Auction. In return, we would provide our rental dates and times in a timely manner and according to the needs of the finance and/or recreation departments. Of course we can provide our annual Notice to Reader done by Pat Morrison of Ian Whitton Accountants and any other information needed by the Town's Finance Department to satisfy any doubts that might arise as to our ability to run the programs for which we are seeking in-kind assistance.
2. Current system not as helpful as it might seem: When we apply the grant money you give us to the rental of the community centre, we are in fact giving you the money back and we are really not much further ahead. If you believe that BVO is doing important and necessary work in the Town, then it seems logical that you would want to help us do it. What we are proposing would streamline the process for both BVO and the Town.

Advantages of partnership to TBM

1. BVO will limit its request to the in-kind assistance mentioned above, and will not ask for any grants from the Town under the Grants and Donations program. Therefore, more funds will be available to spread among the numerous other groups and their special causes which are competing for dollars from that fund.
2. Although social services for the Town are the responsibility of Grey County, BVO is offering to partner with the Town to secure for TBM whatever funding is available for our community members in need. Recently we were able to obtain an \$8000 grant from the Grey County Social Services committee because of a presentation made to them by our Executive Director. BVO itself makes available to families \$11,000 for Recreational Funding and provides \$7000 for youth programming. Yearly we spend over \$17,000 on emergency assistance which could be anything from an overnight stay in a motel to payment of a dental bill to a trip to the food bank.

3. The less money BVO has to spend on rental facilities, the more money we have to put into the programs, services and events we run for the community. We are very efficient. With our huge base of volunteers, we can make every dollar we get stretch like an elastic. In times of crisis, we can be a valuable partner, and we are offering to be on the Town's speed dial when assistance is needed. We have often provided food and clothing for victims of fire or other tragedies, and are anxious to hear about anyone needing our help. Our Executive Director has a thorough knowledge of referral agencies for people in need, and would be a tremendous resource in partnership with the Town. We are also willing to help with specific needs in the community, such as the \$1000 we raised for tornado relief through the sale of apple pies which we baked, and which was matched 2 for 1 by government funding.
4. BVO already has programs compatible with the Sustainable Path, and not just in the area of social services. While most people think of BVO as a charity, we remind the Town that we are a major recycler in this community. While the Town dump is filling up at a rapid pace and costly space saving measures are under discussion, we are busy sending away a minimum of 150 garbage bags and 50 boxes of goods per week, many of which would end up at the dump without the work of our Treasure Shop volunteers.

On many levels, the partnership we are proposing would be a benefit to both parties.

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Beaver Valley Outreach