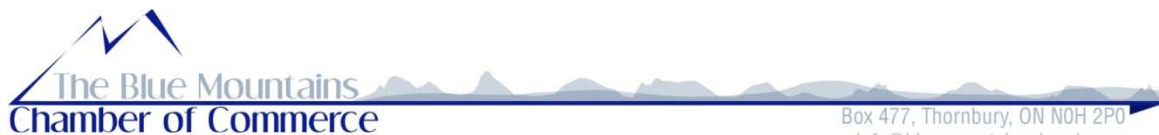


FUNDING REPORT & REQUEST TO THE FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Submitted By:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce's mission promotes member advocacy, business promotion, economic development and community prosperity through partnerships.

The Chamber has developed numerous projects to support their goals and objectives which satisfy numerous goals and action plans within the Sustainable Path and the Red Hot & Blue community plans.

This report to the Finance and Administration Committee provides an analysis of the historical and current operations of the Chamber. It also recognizes gaps within Town services that can be satisfied with these initiatives.

Funding and manpower are the main challenges for the volunteer Board of Directors. With only the ability to support a part-time administrative person, it has been recognized that additional funding will need to be found to increase administrative support to continue providing efficient services to members and the community.

It is to this end that the Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce submit for your consideration, requests for support of the following projects:

1.	Business Resource Centre (Appendix C)	\$1,000
2.	Lifestyle and Cultural Showcase Exhibition (Appendix D)	5,000
3.	Community Promotional Brochure (Appendix E)	2,000
4.	Business and Community Excellence Awards (Appendix F)	2,500
5.	Community and Business Resource Guide (Appendix G)	2,000

For a total funding request for 2012 of	\$12,500
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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce's mission is *"to be the recognized voice of the business community and as such, shall be a catalyst through which business, professional people and community groups work together for the common good and economic prosperity of the community."*

Historical Information

Historically, the products and services provided by the Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce have been in the areas of member promotions, community events, community communications and business networking opportunities. In 2008, the Board took on the task of evaluating the mission of the Chamber. It was determined at that time that to better serve members and the community, and to retain the current dedicated members of the Board, a stronger role in member advocacy and economic development was required.

A significant portion of revenues for the operations of the Chamber has historically been received through municipal funding under the Grants and Donation budget.

Current Operations

A volunteer Board of Directors, consisting of 12 members (See Appendix A for list of Directors) and one part-time administrative assistant provide services to a consistent membership base of approximately 200 members. There is a current and active committee structure including the following standing committees: Executive, Finance, Economic Development, Membership, Events, Nomination and various ad hoc committees. As well, Directors sit on the following regional committees: Grey Bruce Chambers Group, Georgian Bay Chambers Group and Sparc Entrepreneurial Challenge. Locally, Directors participate on the Agri and Business Watch committees. In addition, Directors regularly attend The Blue Mountains council meetings.

Recognizing the numerous hours and efforts of the Directors in maintaining the daily operations of the Chamber, as well as their committee responsibilities, a review of operations was recently performed. The need for administrative assistance to help carry out the Chambers' mandate was realized. A new business plan providing for the Chamber office, located on Hwy 26, to be open one day per week with a part-time administrative assistant was established. It was recognized that member dues could not support further expansion of this position. To better fulfill the Chamber mission and relieve the strain on the volunteer Directors, alternative funding opportunities would be required. An organizational SWOT Analysis of current operations has been provided as Appendix B to this report.

GAP ANALYSIS

Over the previous four years, many great initiatives have been considered by the Chamber. The largest challenge in seeing these initiatives come to fruition is manpower and funding resources. All Directors either own their own businesses or have senior positions which make additional workloads difficult to manage effectively.

With the change in funding structure by the Town, the Chamber now must find additional sources of revenue to replace the previous monetary support received from the Town. The search for replacement funding also demands additional manpower. The Board of Directors is dedicated to fulfilling these initiatives but funding to supplement their efforts with administrative assistance is necessary to efficiently meet the time lines for delivery.

The Blue Mountains Chamber believes these initiatives are essential to promote and retain business in The Blue Mountains. A need for non-partisan promotion of the many attributes of the town to potential businesses looking to relocate is urgently required. A centralized resource centre for businesses to find assistance when expanding their business, or for new businesses when deciding on locations to open or relocate, has been one of the most identified gaps by the Chamber membership. As well, non-partisan promotion of all businesses should be addressed to ensure continued retention of the existing businesses.

The Chamber has the desire and expertise to fulfill these gaps in town services. However, to successfully meet the immediate financial demands of these projects, startup funds will be required to provide the quality of product and service necessary to provide these benefits to the community.

FUNDING REQUEST

This year, the Chamber was informed that requests for funding for 2012 will be received on a project specific basis only. All requests should relate to a strategy or action plan as noted in the recently developed community plans, Sustainable Path and Red Hot and Blue. This created an immediate need to review the works of the Chamber to ascertain opportunities to meet both the goals of the Chamber as well as The Blue Mountains council and staff.

Many opportunities, both in economic development and for the community, were recognized in these plans. As you will see on the attached project summary forms (Appendices C through G), each of these projects will help to achieve a specific Strategic Objective or Action as identified in the Sustainable Path or Red Hot and Blue community plans. It is noted that to meet the goals and objectives of these plans, there is “the need for integration, the need for collaboration, the need for efficiency and effectiveness”ⁱ to accomplish these goals. The Blue Mountains Chamber will work diligently to seek the necessary partnerships and

foster good working relationships to satisfy those needs and ensure the investment made by the Town will meet their quality standards.

We submit for your consideration requests for support of the following projects:

6.	Business Resource Centre (Appendix C)	\$1,000
7.	Lifestyle and Cultural Showcase Exhibition (Appendix D)	5,000
8.	Community Promotional Brochure (Appendix E)	2,000
9.	Business and Community Excellence Awards (Appendix F)	2,500
10.	Community and Business Resource Guide (Appendix G)	2,000

For a total funding request of **\$12,500**

SUMMARY

This report has provided an overview of the historical and current operations of the Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce. Gaps in business services currently offered in the Town have been identified. The need to provide effective and efficient programs to fill these gaps by promoting economic development, providing resources and assistance for business retention and promotion can be fulfilled by the Chamber through the proposed projects provided in this report. These projects will not only eliminate these gaps but meet some of the goals and action plans in the Sustainable Path and Red Hot and Blue community plans. An investment by the Town for \$12,500 will enable the Blue Mountains Chamber to provide an exceptional return on that investment.

APPENDIX A

2011 Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce Directors

Name	Position	Business
Margaret Fairley	President	Blue Mountain Village Assoc.
Jim Farmilo	Vice President	Raven Consulting
Diana Bailey	Secretary	Inspirations in Home Spa
Deborah Brown	Treasurer	Blue Mountains Veterinary Services
George Matamoros	Past President	The Diamond Studio
Jean-Claude Sleighter	Director	21 North B&B
Dolf Jansen	Director	Temagami Landscape Design & Build Inc.
Shelley Savill	Director	Running Tide Inc.
Pam Wright	Director	Percel Inc.
Keita Inoue	Director	Design Office Zen
Linda Simpson	Director	Georgian Triangle Tourist Assoc.
Lynda Wilson	Director	Meridian Credit Union

APPENDIX B

Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce SWOT Analysis

Strengths:	Weaknesses:	Opportunities:	Threats:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A long standing, dedicated, hardworking, knowledgeable Board of Directors provide consistent products and services to members and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Funding for new part-time staff only allows for one day per week of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Directors are keen to establish new benefits, policies and procedures to attract new members and retain existing ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The amount of funding received from the Town is unknown at this time as Town Council has recently changed funding structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Executive Committee succession plan in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reliant upon volunteers and efforts to complete projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Many avenues for fundraising and sponsorship are available for investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It is possible the Chamber will receive a significantly reduced amount or possibly no funding assistance from the Town in 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organizational structure with corresponding Bylaw in place and functioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Many Directors long standing and succession planning in place but difficult to find volunteers to commit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ New part-time employee hired to assist with funding applications, administration and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If Town funding is greatly reduced or not received, it is possible that products and services to members and the community will have to be cut or drastically reduced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ownership of office building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fund raising and sponsorship initiatives need to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Municipal government is eager to work with community groups for the mutual benefit of both parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Should products and services be reduced, membership numbers will decline due to lack of value for fees, further reducing revenues to fund operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strong relationships with Town and Community Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individual commitment to fundraising and sponsorship initiative development limited to a few directors 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consistent membership base 			

APPENDIX C

Business Resource Centre

Strategy:

Provide a resource centre for business within the Town of the Blue Mountains

Applicable Community Plan and Strategy: Red, Hot and Blue (Key actions are in bold type)

It is expressly stated in the Study (p82) the guiding principle of “Organizational Design –The Need for Integration, The Need for Collaboration, The Need for Efficiency and Effectiveness” which is the underlying rationale supporting the Chamber as the best organization for this job.

1. **Partner with SBEC to provide one stop information for businesses. Maintain list of available spaces and buildings for economic development and enterprise. Use local business leaders as mentors, connecting entrepreneurs to existing business network (p24-25)**
2. **Encourage economic development that is compatible with the Town’s values and priorities and attracts new business initiative that support economic diversity (p22)**
3. **Implement mentorship...among businesses that share common elements (p23)**
4. **Identify existing education, technical expertise and physical infrastructure...to support business (p23)**
5. **Establish a small business incubator program/business support centre.... (p24)**
6. **Implement a youth business leaders mentoring program by connecting young people to local business leaders (p26)**
7. **Provide start-up support for consulting, IT, architects and other service based professionals (p28)**
8. **Establish and develop a small business start-up centre (p28)**
9. **Work with local entrepreneurs to investigate potential business opportunities (p28)**
10. Attract businesses, institutions, industries (P10-priority goal)
11. Encourage small business to follow TIAC sustainable guidelines (p13)
12. Help business achieve a higher level of service... (p14)
13. Encourage adoption of the friendliest place...(p14)
14. Maintain and enhance prosperous and sustainable agriculture (p18)

Encourage sustainability in...business sectors (Our Sustainable Path)

Supportive Action:

The actions for fiscal 2012 are primarily the development of the resource centre print material and information. These include copies of relevant studies done by the town, copies of zoning and land use documents, Council minutes and resolutions relating to business expansion, location etc. The primary action will be the development of a grant request for the establishment of the centre for business development.

The vision of the centre is to establish workstations for those needing guidance or high speed web access, together with a knowledgeable person who can guide them through the web information and provide local mentoring for specific sectors or issues.

We anticipate our primary users will be youth businesses, agri-businesses or other home-based businesses without high speed web access, and persons interested in expanding, purchasing or locating within the Blue Mountains in addition to any local business (home-based or otherwise) needing information relating to their business.

Time Line:

- Year One:** Planning, researching grant information, Application preparation and submission
Preparation of print library: Photocopying, cataloguing, design of 'new business' package for potential new business owners (see Appendix C-1)
- Year Two:** Maintenance and extension of print library
Set-up of work stations and Web-based information services (dependent on external grant)
- Year Three:** Expansion as required by market demand subject to external grant. Provision of sites for start-up or new businesses (small business incubator)

Budget with Assumptions:

- Year One: \$3000:**
Staff time and admin: \$1500
Printing and cataloguing: \$1500
- Year Two: \$90,000 (subject to external grant and finalization of program elements)**
Computers and related equipment: \$15,000
Office equipment: \$15,000
Support staff time: \$25,000
Building and operations: \$20,000
Marketing and support: \$5,000

Printed business information package: \$10,000
Year Three: Subject to external grant, market demand and program elements.

Begin cost recovery strategy

Partners: potentially Thornbury BIA, Blue Mountain Village Association, Town of the Blue Mountains, Center for Business and Economic Development, Small Business Enterprise Center

Funding Request 2012: \$1000 (in kind—staff time and photocopying costs to help populate the library)

Value to Town:

- ✓ Many hours of Town staff time answering basic questions and guiding appropriate applications for services. By pre-educating applicants, may also reduce number of iterations of minor development permits. If it saves 1000 person/hrs. At an average cost of \$50/hr., it represents a savings of \$50,000, or about half of a staff position.
- ✓ Targets many key strategic goals and objectives from the Red, Hot and Blue study
- ✓ Demonstrates civic support for local businesses as well as recruitment objectives
- ✓ Encourage youth entrepreneurs
- ✓ Support businesses hampered by lack of high speed internet connection
- ✓ Serve as a centre for business relations and information within the Town of the Blue Mountains
- ✓ Provides non-partisan business promotion
- ✓ Re-enforce principles of Community Planning and Design and Sustainability as business supported objectives

Appendix C-1

Examples of items to populate the proposed business library

Note that these will be populated as time and cost permit during 2012. The items are roughly in order of importance, but may be adjusted depending on ease of acquisition and market demand.

1. Town Official Plan
2. Out Sustainable Path
3. Red, Hot and Blue
 - a. Literature on hospitality, training packages (e.g. Access to Chamber on line training)
 - b. Customer service guidelines, etc.
4. Community Improvement Plan
5. TIAC sustainable toolkit
6. Other current studies (e.g. parking)
7. Zoning maps with descriptions of appropriate businesses
8. Community Design Guidelines
9. Regulations regarding development and other items (e.g. noise, parking, etc.)
10. By-laws relating to business activities (e.g. Sign by-law, parking, short-term accommodation, drive-thru facilities, etc.)
11. Current development and other charges and fees relating to regulations and by-laws
12. Inventory of zoned land, serviced land, shovel-ready properties
13. List of town staff with area of expertise respecting questions or proposals
14. Copies of by-laws relating to business as passed by council (monthly updates)
15. List of properties under development with expected population
16. Demographic statistics for TBM and region
17. List of web-sites providing business information (Federal, Provincial, Regional)
18. List of granting bodies relating to small business
19. List of regional associations and support groups for business
20. Contact names for local businesses willing to provide information or support to new businesses.

APPENDIX D

Lifestyle and Cultural Exhibition

Strategy: “Not a Trade Show” A Life Style Show and a Cultural Exhibition highlighting local food, wine, and agriculture. All at an interactive level to create a sustainable four season tourist destination.

Applicable Community Plan and Strategy:

Sustainable Path, Theme – Be part of a tourism destination that distinguishes itself by its sustainable focus thereby creating a competitive market advantage as well as serving its community, and work together with neighboring municipalities to promote the region.

Supportive Action:

1. Develop lifestyle media promotions of the area that appeal to those with a health orientated lifestyle and an appetite for “Life’s Finer Things” (e.g., walking, cycling, swimming, gourmet cuisine, wines, arts, crafts etc.
2. Create a culinary and local food network and promote businesses regionally through marketing material (e.g.; Brochures, internet, maps etc.) in which local artisans tell their stories.
3. Promote The Blue Mountains “unparalleled quality of life” as an economic asset. It is clear from its leading population growth that people already prefer to live here.

Time Line:

Year One: Develop a cohesive Plan

- Develop Regional Partnerships to ensure success in developing regional tourism
- Research partnerships and relationships with potential national sponsors
- Establish date for event in late fall and or early spring event.
- Establish marketing data, printed material, presentation
- Conduct ongoing community engagement with community residents, business owners, and business groups
- Establish floor plans and booth sizes for participants and applicable fee structure. E.g. live cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, and food pairings.
- Celebrity speakers, seminars, special guests,

**Year Two: Review first year show.
Prepare recommendations for improvement,
Marketing and Growth of Participants and Sponsors.**

Year Three: Further Review and growth development put in place.

Budget:

Year One: Startup Funding to \$ 5,000
Attract Major Sponsor,
Prepare material and Promote Event

Year Two: Event Final Preparation and Execution \$25,000

Year Three: Event review, post analysis, \$30,000
recommendations for improvements,
Second year event execution

Partners: Community as a whole will be asked to partner
Organizations will be approached to supply one person to
participate on a larger committee that will oversee the
implementation and operation of the event.

Funding Request 2012: \$5,000.00

Value to Town:

Promotion of sustainable products and services available in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Promote diverse agricultural business as well as encourage tourism.

APPENDIX E

Community Promotional Brochure

Strategy: COMMUNITY PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE

Applicable Community Plan and Strategy:

Sustainable Path, Theme – Community Diversity & Identity; Goal – pg. 43 - All residents & their local government identify strongly with the Blue Mountains community culture & feel both a sense of pride & a responsibility for our community success

Supportive Action:

Develop a non-partisan promotional brochure showcasing the life-style, culture and opportunities available within The Blue Mountains for business. Copies will be provided to all businesses for distribution at tradeshow. Copies will be provided to the Small Business Enterprise Centre and regional Chambers of Commerce.

Time Line: (3 years if applicable)

Year One:

- research partnerships and sponsors
- prepare design and content
- print and provide to distribution centres

Year Two:

- Evaluate success of promotion
- Update information and provide revised brochures if successful

Year Three:

- As in year two

Budget with Assumptions:

Year One:

Sponsorship	\$3000	
Town Funding	<u>2000</u>	
Total Revenue		\$5000
Design	\$2000	
Printing	2000	
Salaries	<u>1000</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$5000</u>
Net		\$ 0

Partners: BIA, Georgian Triangle Tourism Association, Blue Mountains Village Association, The Blue Mountains

Funding Request 2012: \$2,000

Value to Town:

By partnering with the Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce, the Town will be able to leverage their investment to effectively promote economic development. This project will increase the image and awareness of the Town and meet the goal in the Sustainable Path regarding promotion of The Blue Mountains culture.

APPENDIX F

Business Community Excellence Awards

Strategy:

Showcase the most successful and influential businesses in the Blue Mountains

Applicable Community Plan and Strategy:

Red, Hot and Blue: A number of items specific for different awards, including:

- ✓ Encourage adoption of the friendliest place to visit, live, work , and play mentality (p14)
- ✓ Promote...culinary arts, agriculture and eco-tourism.... (p14)
- ✓ Maintain and enhance prosperous and sustainable agriculture (p18)
- ✓ Conduct ongoing community engagement with community residents, business owners and business groups(p22)
- ✓ Attract and retain youth by providing ... employment options (p26)
- ✓ Encourage sustainability in tourism and business sectors (Our Sustainable Path)

Supportive Action:

Re-align existing BMCC awards to match the goals, objectives and strategies outlined in the Red, Hot and Blue and Our Sustainable Path studies.

While retaining awards based on excellence, we have initiated a number of awards specifically to support the Town:

- Sustainability Award,
- Youth Entrepreneur Award,
- Taste of Blue Award, and
- Innovation Award

We are also proposing to implement a major promotional package through publication of the award winners, company descriptions, both web based and print/radio media based. This will allow us to celebrate the exceptional businesses in our community, as well as showcase our best to attract others of equal caliber.

Finally, we are proposing a selection committee including a town representative and members at large as well as representation from the Chamber Directors, and we are opening some awards to individuals (Community Contribution Award and Sustainability Award).

Time Line:

Year One: Initiate new award categories. Prepare media contacts.

Prepare press information, arrange and implement nomination and selection processes.

Year Two: Evaluate and modify as appropriate both nomination and selection process.

Year Three: as year two

Budget with Assumptions:

Year One: \$2500:

Print media excellence campaign: \$1155,

Trophies and Certificates: \$675

Business profile in directory: \$300

Admin and Staff time: \$370

Year Two: \$2500—as above

Year Three: \$2500—as above

Partners: BIA, BMVA, The Blue Mountains

Funding Request 2012: \$2500

Value to Town:

- ✓ Drive local support of businesses
- ✓ Demonstrate quality of business Blue Mountain has and wants to attract
- ✓ Encourage pride of place
- ✓ Encourages cultural, agricultural, gastronomic, tourism and youth businesses specifically
- ✓ Low hanging fruit that is relatively inexpensive, easy to achieve and has strong impact within community
- ✓ A sign of action and successful implementation of elements of both studies.
- ✓ Consistent branding (Taste of Blue, Look Inside Blue) with prior and ongoing programs

APPENDIX G

Community and Resource Business Guide

Strategy: Community Business and Resource Guide

Provide community showcase for all businesses and community resources in the Blue Mountains.

Applicable Community Plan and Strategy:

Red Hot and Blue – Encourage economic development that is compatible with the Towns' values and priorities and attracts new business initiatives that support economic diversity.

- Showcase and promote culture, heritage and archaeological areas
- Foster the development of an artistic rural economy
- Conduct ongoing community engagement with community residents, business owners and business groups

Supportive Action:

Develop a resource piece in conjunction with the Business Resource Centre that can be distributed to the public and interested businesses looking at relocating to the Town. By partnering with the Town's business listing supplier, a synergy can be created in print as well as on line, showcasing the many resources, both business, cultural and community. Volunteers, award winners, artists, youth Initiatives as well as businesses, community service groups, schools and religious institutions will be highlighted. A comprehensive overview of the culture of The Blue Mountains will be created in one publication.

Time Line:

Year One: Design and content development

Year Two: Production

Year Three: Evaluation, update and republication

Budget:

Year One: \$2,500

Year Two: \$5,000

Year Three: \$5,000

Partners: BIA, BMVA, The Blue Mountains

Funding Request 2012: \$2,000

Value to Town:

This guide will fulfill the current gap in documentation of the cultural and business community of The Blue Mountains. It will promote volunteerism, youth and excellence within the community. The many diverse businesses as well as artists will be profiled.

ⁱ Red Hot and Blue, page 82