



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: D. BELL, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

SUBMITTED BY: D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute Reciprocal Agreements with the Simcoe County District School Board and Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board regarding the use of School and City facilities to allow for the parties to increase the utilization of each other's facilities for programming that supports health and well-being, with the terms and conditions satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services and Director of Recreation and Culture Services.
2. That funding in the amount of up to \$27,300 be added to the Recreation and Culture Services 2023 budget and up to \$42,600 to the department's 2024 base budget, funded from the Reinvestment Reserve to allow for the delivery of a pilot program to provide additional after-school activities at several elementary schools in Barrie and staff report back to General Committee at the completion of the 2023/2024 school year on the pilot and expansion opportunities.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

Purpose

3. The purpose of this report is to:
 - Seek authorization to execute an agreement with both the Simcoe County District School Board and Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board that would allow for an increase in the use of both school board and City facilities, with each party having access to the other's facilities at reduced rates and with an increased priority status for bookings; and
 - Seek additional funding/authorization for Recreation and Culture programming staff to be retained to deliver programming at several public schools as part of a pilot during the 2023/2024 school year.

Background

4. On March 8, 2023, City Council adopted motion 23-G-043, as follows:

“23-G-043 AGREEMENT WITH SCHOOL BOARD - USE OF FACILITIES

1. That the Chief Administrative Officer and the General Manager of Community and Corporate Services be directed to negotiate an agreement with the Simcoe County School Boards to open school facilities for after school and weekend programming;
 2. That the following be taken into consideration as part of the agreement:
 - a) The initial focus on school locations be in close proximity to under-serviced areas including downtown, northwest Barrie and southeast Barrie, and proximity to vulnerable young people and at-risk youth;
 - b) The programming utilizes community volunteers and organizations to the greatest degree possible with the inclusion of community partners;
 - c) Insurance and liability associated with the use of the schools; and
 - d) Programming to commence on September 1, 2023.
 3. That staff in the Recreation and Culture Services Department report back to General Committee concerning the resources required to coordinate this program.
 4. That staff apply for any available provincial or federal funding that would support the organization and implementation of the programming.”
5. Staff have met with representatives of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) on five occasions and twice with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) to discuss use of school facilities and reciprocal arrangements. As part of these discussions, a reciprocal agreement, existing policies of the Boards with respect to bookings, capacity for additional bookings at each other’s facilities, use by other community organizations, arrangements for equipment storage, and many other related matters have been discussed.
6. Reciprocal agreements typically provide schools and/or their students with access to municipal facilities at lower rates in exchange for the municipality having access to school facilities at Community Use of Schools Program rates that are lower than the standard rates during non-school hours. They also provide each party with a measure of priority status for bookings, where such bookings wouldn’t interfere with regular operations. Individual rental contracts are still required under these agreements.

ANALYSIS

7. The City and the SCDSB have land and infrastructure joint use agreements, and some individual schools have arrangements related to a specific field or facility use. However, the parties do not have a formal reciprocal agreement in place. During the meetings held with the SCDSB representatives, there has been strong interest in entering into a reciprocal agreement with the City of Barrie to support increased community/student utilization of each parties’ facilities.

8. The staff from each of the parties have discussed the framework associated with a reciprocal agreement that addresses each parties' obligations and provisions related to:
 - Rental charges
 - Use of school board/City equipment by the other party
 - Scheduling of facilities
 - Damage to facilities or equipment
 - Insurance requirements and indemnification of the parties
 - Defaults on payments
 - Automatic renewal clauses with an option for either party to terminate based on a defined notice period.
9. Staff of the Simcoe County District School Board have advised that:
 - In general, there is an existing high level of utilization of school gymnasiums;
 - The secondary school gymnasium facilities have had bookings with community sports organizations for weekday after-school and on most weekends;
 - The SCDSB offers after-school programming (before and after school programming mandated by the Province where viable and runs after to school to 6:00 p.m. in most cases) in most of its schools directly, and as a result, with the exception of Friday evenings, most elementary gymnasiums are booked in the early evenings;
 - Elementary schools can begin permits at 6:00 p.m.(generally), and 7:00 p.m. (generally) at secondary schools. Outdoor fields/amenities across the system open to permits beginning at 6:30 p.m.;
 - The availability of these elementary school facilities either later in the evening or on the weekends is also impacted by whether custodial or other staff are available to support access to the building; and
 - While most elementary schools have gymnasium space available on weekends, additional custodial charges would apply that would increase the cost of delivering programming and are not able to be reduced under a reciprocal agreement.
10. The staff representatives discussed potential programming opportunities in the windows available at the elementary school sites as the parties wanted to avoid displacing traditional bookings of community organizations. It was also noted that based on past experience, youth programming participation is limited after 7 pm.
11. As a result, staff are proposing a pilot program that it would hope to expand in the future, subject to ongoing discussions with the SCDSB. The proposed pilot would begin in September 2023 as part of the reciprocal agreement and would involve:
 - Access to Codrington Public School and Steele Street School for the City to provide youth programming with one evening per week of indoor soccer skills and two evenings per week of basketball skills as no SCDSB after-school programming is offered at these locations;
 - Access to Hillcrest Public School two to three evenings per week (6:30 pm or later) for City programming;
 - There would be shared use of existing school equipment, defined by location;
 - At least one City staff member would be onsite at all times to deliver any programming with the ability to have volunteers supplement the City staff member(s); and

- The City would have the opportunity to store any additional equipment it purchases on site, which could be used by the SCDSB during school hours (avoiding the need for City staff to transport equipment to schools for each session).
12. In addition, staff are also looking at opportunities to utilize libraries and classrooms within schools particularly in the north-west and south-east areas of the community. The programming would be for non-sport programming such as arts and crafts. For example, currently, programming is offered after 5:00 pm at Lampman Lane Community Centre/Andrew Hunter by both the City and other organizations in the gymnasium, Monday to Friday including offering a youth centre opportunity on Friday nights. Staff are continuing to investigate opportunities to expand using other rooms in schools.
 13. As part of the reciprocal agreement, the City would provide the SCDSB with access to soccer fields, ball diamonds, ice pads, pools and tennis courts during school hours at reduced rates or no charge. Generally, usage during these times is limited and staff are confident it can make the arrangements for utilization of most of the facilities that won't negatively impact existing user groups or create a significant additional burden on the Parks Operations team. As well, staff would look to provide access to the soccer fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts outside of school hours at reduced rates, when there is availability. Restrictions on availability would be based on operational needs and existing user agreements.
 14. Staff have estimated that the reduced rates from the SCDSB under a reciprocal agreement would generally offset any reduction in net revenue that the City would achieve from reducing its rates during school hours, while increasing utilization of both organizations' facilities and more importantly, the health and well-being of the community.
 15. City staff explored the availability of woodshop space for the Barrie Woodworking Club at school sites. Under a reciprocal agreement, the City would be required to offer programming directly and other community groups (such as the Barrie Woodworking Club or other sports clubs) would not be eligible to participate or offer programming using this agreement. Recently, a new shared woodworking studio (Framework Studios), with a mission to grow the woodworking community opened in Barrie which may provide an opportunity for partnerships with the Barrie Woodworking Club.
 16. Staff are still in discussions with the SMCDSDB regarding opportunities to utilize gymnasiums, classrooms and libraries at the Catholic Board's schools. The Board representatives have identified similar utilization levels as the SCDSB. However, the SMDSB may have availability at schools in both the north-west and south-east areas of the City for youth programming after the school day. The representatives of both parties are collaborating on specific school sites and are anticipating an arrangement similar to the one with the SCDSB.
 17. The pilot program at the schools is anticipated to require additional net expenditures in the amount of up to \$27,300 in 2023 and up to \$42,600 in 2024. This includes funding for up to two part-time Recreation Assistant positions to deliver the school site programming, as well as additional equipment in the schools and, should agreements be negotiated, with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. Staff have applied for a grant that may be able to offset the majority of or all of the costs. As the grant availability is not guaranteed, staff are seeking an additional \$69,900 to cover these costs for 2023/2024 school year.
 18. Staff are seeking the authority for the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the reciprocal agreements once the terms and conditions are finalized and subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services and Director of Recreation and Culture Services.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS

19. There are no environmental or climate change matters directly related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

20. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 General Committee could choose to not authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the reciprocal agreements with the Simcoe County District School Board and Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board for reciprocal use of facilities.

This alternative is not recommended. The reciprocal agreements would provide for an increase in the City's priority status for use of schools and also provide facilities at a reduced rate which would reduce the cost of delivering programming.

Alternative #2 General Committee could choose to not increase the Recreation and Culture Services budget to allow for the necessary staffing and equipment to provide after-school programming.

This alternative is not recommended. The additional funding is required to deliver programming using the additional facilities.

FINANCIAL

21. As noted, the additional costs associated with providing programming in public school facilities after hours would be a maximum of \$27,300 in 2023 and up to \$42,600 in 2024. A maximum is being provided as staff are still working on additional opportunities. The funding would be utilized for up to two part-time Recreation Assistant positions to deliver the school site programming, as well as additional equipment to be used at the sites.
22. Staff have applied for a grant that may be able to offset a large portion of the additional costs. Staff will continue to seek other grant opportunities that are aligned with youth programming.

LINKAGE TO 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

23. The recommendations included in this Staff Report are related to the following goals contained in 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.
- ✓ Thriving Community
 - ✓ Responsible Governance
24. The reciprocal agreements with the SCDSB and SMCDSD would provide an opportunity to deliver more recreational programming in the community by utilizing additional facilities. A focus of the programming will also include initiatives that promote social connections that are vital to community wellness. The pilot initiatives are expected to offer opportunities to participate in recreation and cultural programming that would not otherwise be attainable for many youth at risk.
25. Grant applications are being submitted to offset the costs of additional programming to support services our community needs, while minimizing the contribution from the tax base, thereby keeping taxes low.