



Municipal Election Forum Grant Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 239-AD-24

Approval Date: November 26, 2024

Revise Date:

Motion Number: CRM20241126.1021

Repeal Date:

Supersedes: New

Review Date:

1.0 **Policy Intent**

A municipal election is held in the City of Cold Lake every four (4) years in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act*. The City recognizes that an informed electorate is key to a functioning democracy; and there is value in increasing opportunities for the public to hear from election candidates through public forums. Promoting an informed electorate may translate to increased participation in the electoral process and community involvement in the City of Cold Lake.

2.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the distribution of a grant to organizations that wish to host a municipal election candidate forum within the jurisdiction of the City.

3.0 **Policy Statement**

The City of Cold Lake shall establish a grant program for organization(s) that wish to host a municipal election forum in an effort to reduce financial barriers that may otherwise prevent an organization from hosting such an event.

Parameters for the grant program shall be established to ensure that any involvement of the City of Cold Lake in information sharing for candidates for the municipal election must respect the City remaining impartial, unbiased and at arm's length from all political activities of municipal election candidates. This policy aims to establish a process that maintains public confidence in the democratic process and administrative impartiality while increasing access to valuable information about election candidates.

4.0 **Managerial Guidelines**

Eligibility Criteria for Community Organizations

4.1 In order for an organization to be deemed eligible to receive a grant, the organization must meet the following criteria to ensure a non-partisan, impartial and non-biased event:

- 4.1.1 be a non-profit organization with active status that operates within the City of Cold Lake;
- 4.1.2 operate as a non-political entity that is not affiliated with, funded by, or otherwise in association with any political party provincially or federally within Canada, or internationally;

- 4.1.3 not be affiliated with, funded by, promoting or otherwise associated with any municipal election candidate of the City of Cold Lake municipal election;
- 4.1.4 have candidates from their organization's Board of Directors running in the municipal election;
- 4.1.5 not be actively advocating for any municipal election result in the City of Cold Lake, or for any other municipal, provincial, or federal election in Canada.

Eligibility for Municipal Election Forum

- 4.2 Any municipal election forum supported through a grant under this policy must meet the following criteria:
 - 4.2.1 City of Cold Lake municipal election forum shall be held on a date and time determined at the sole discretion of the City of Cold Lake;
 - 4.2.2 Location of the forum shall be the Cold Lake Energy Centre, Reid Fieldhouse;
 - 4.2.3 No admission fee may be charged to attendees of the forum;
 - 4.2.4 All municipal election candidates must be offered the opportunity to attend and participate in the forum;
 - 4.2.5 A non-biased, non-partisan mediator must be utilized to ask questions to each municipal election candidate.
- 4.3 The hosting organization shall be solely responsible for arranging for a non-biased, non-partisan municipal candidate election forum including:
 - 4.3.1 Selecting and arranging for a moderator;
 - 4.3.2 Establishing format, questions, and time limits for responses provided;
 - 4.3.3 Implementing the plans as outlined in Section 4.8.
 - 4.3.4 Any advertising in addition to the limited advertising provided by the City;
 - 4.3.5 Any costs or additions requested at the Energy Centre that are not specifically identified in this policy as being provided by the City.

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- 4.4 City of Cold Lake shall provide to an eligible organization:
 - 4.4.1 one (1) grant in the amount of \$7,500;
 - 4.4.2 the use of the Cold Lake Energy Centre, Reid Fieldhouse for one evening at no cost including access to and use of, chairs, tables, stage, and inhouse lighting systems; and
 - 4.4.3 limited advertising of the forum at the discretion of the City.
- 4.5 The City reserves the right to refuse to provide a grant where at the discretion of the City it is determined that it would not be in the public interest to do so, including but not limited to situations where there are no proposals that meet the eligibility criteria established.

- 4.6 The City reserves the right to request that that grant be repaid to the City where, at the discretion of the City, it is determined that the municipal election candidate forum was, including but limited to, not held in accordance with the City's policy requiring a non-partisan, non-biased forum.

Application Process

- 4.7 Each application will be submitted in the form of a written proposal.
- 4.8 Interested community organizations must submit their proposal to the City of Cold Lake, Attention: CAO or Designate by: June 15 prior to the general municipal election. If no proposals are received, an additional proposal submission deadline may be considered.
- 4.9 The proposal package shall include the following elements in the document:
- 4.9.1 A cover letter stating the intent of commitment of the organization and whether any conflicts of interest (or perceptions thereof) may exist;
 - 4.9.2 A Section describing the overall format of the forum including what resources the organization will be using to planning, setup, conduct, and tear down of the forum after conclusion;
 - 4.9.3 A Section describing the layout of the facility such amenities as tables, chairs, stage, rooms, etc. (including diagrams);
 - 4.9.4 A Section detailing the security risks, mitigation consideration, and approach.
 - 4.9.5 A Section detailing the approach to audio/video that will be used for the forum as well as the approach to having the forum livestreamed and available online;
 - 4.9.6 A Section detailing the approach to advertising;
 - 4.9.7 A Section outlining the budget;
 - 4.9.8 A Section depicting the current insurance;
 - 4.9.9 A Section depicting the organization(s) current registration confirming the current appointments to their Board of Directors.
- 4.10 All proposals received by the deadline will be provided to the Council Election Forum Selection Committee (the "Selection Committee") for consideration.
- 4.11 The Selection Committee shall provide its recommendation and select the organization to receive a grant by July 31 prior to the general municipal election.

Application Evaluation Criteria

- 4.12 The Selection Committee may only consider providing funding to applicants that meet the following criteria:
- 4.12.1 The application must be submitted by a community organization that meets the eligibility criteria pursuant to this policy.
 - 4.12.2 The application must be for a forum that meets the eligibility criteria in this policy.

- 4.13 The Selection Committee may consider the extent to which the organization applying and the forum planned meets the criteria set out in this policy.

5.0 References

N/A

6.0 Persons Affected

City of Cold Lake staff
Members of the Public
Municipal election candidates

7.0 Revision/Review History

DECEMBER 10, 2024

Date

DECEMBER 10, 2024

Date



Chief Administrative Officer



Mayor

