

Subject: Town of Pelham Support for Grant Applications Seeking Funding For Rural Internet Connectivity Enhancements

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0055, Town of Pelham Support for Grant Applications Seeking Funding for Rural Internet Connectivity Enhancements;

AND THAT Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to provide letters of endorsement and support on behalf of the Town of Pelham as it pertains to any future third party application for funding under the Universal Broadband Fund to improve broadband coverage in Pelham.

Background:

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada is accepting applications for funding support under the Universal Broadband Fund to improve broadband coverage. Improvements to broadband capabilities, with speeds of at least 75 Mbps download and 10Mbps upload is anticipated to allow individuals and businesses to better access government services, e-commerce and internet-based resources, including e-learning.

To date, the two letters of support have been provided in support of applications, with an informal Council endorsement. Adoption of the resolution as proposed will allow the Chief Administrative Officer to provide letters of support in a timely and efficient manner, given delays that can be experienced due to receipt of requests and Council agenda preparation timelines. The benefit to the community is multi-faceted, not only for e-commerce but also to assist households in the more remote parts of the Town of Pelham with better ability to enhance social inclusiveness and stay connected to others when personal visits are impacted under various circumstances including, but not limited to, the ongoing pandemic and stay at home initiatives.

Analysis:

These grant applications by third parties do not require the Town of Pelham to contribute to the cost; therefore, it will benefit the rural residents without impacting the local tax levy.

Financial Considerations:

There are no financial implications to the Town by supporting these grant applications by third party providers.

Alternatives Reviewed:

There are no other alternatives since the funding of improving rural internet connectivity can only be funded by these grants since funds are not in the Town's long-term capital plan. Therefore, it is critical for the Town to provide letter of support to these third party providers seeking grant funding.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Communication and Engagement

Support for applications under the broadband improvement programs will assist in enhancing internet provision to the underserved areas within the Town of Pelham.

Consultation:

N/A

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

None

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