



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** June 23, 2021

From: Marie Fenwick
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services **File:** 11-7000-01/2021-Vol 01

Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services

Re: **Community Services – Non-profit Organizations Wellness Check**

Staff Recommendations

1. That Community Services staff continue to collaborate with non-profit community organizations on addressing the organizational impacts of COVID-19, including conducting a follow-up Wellness Check, as outlined in the staff report titled “Community Services – Non-profit Organizations Wellness Check,” dated June 23, 2021, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, and the Director, Recreation and Sport Services.

Marie Fenwick
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
(604-276-4288)

Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services
(604-247-4669)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS:	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information in regards to the overall organizational health of the non-profit organizations (“organizations”) that work closely with the Community Services Division to provide services to the community. In light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, a Wellness Check was completed with these organizations to assess their wellbeing in terms of finances, governance and the continued ability to provide services to the community. This report summarizes the findings and proposes next steps.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 One Community Together:

3.3 Utilize an interagency and intercultural approach to service provision.

This report also supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #5 Sound Financial Management:

Accountable, transparent, and responsible financial management that supports the needs of the community into the future.

5.4 Work cooperatively and respectfully with all levels of government and stakeholders while advocating for the best interests of Richmond.

Analysis

Background

The City holds service, lease or rental agreements with a number of organizations that work closely with the Community Services Division to provide a range of services to the community. These organizations play an integral role in delivering opportunities for Richmond residents to promote their health and wellbeing, connect with nature, explore avenues for creative expression, and build social and cultural connections. They also add vibrancy by enabling volunteerism. Non-profit organizations also play a role in providing employment opportunities in communities; in 2019, the non-profit sector provided almost 13 per cent of all jobs in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021).

The operating budgets of these organizations range from tens of thousands of dollars to over 4 million dollars per year. Some function primarily with volunteers, while others employ over 100 full-time, part-time and/or seasonal staff in a given year.

In March 2020, the City made the decision to temporarily close all facilities to the public in order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This resulted in the cancellation of all in-person programs and a shift to alternate service delivery formats, such as online programs or wellness checks by telephone. This resulted in the need to lay off, or not schedule, a significant number of staff employed by some of these organizations. As restrictions have evolved, these organizations have adjusted program offerings in alignment with both the Public Health Orders (PHO) and the Restoring Richmond Plan, and many have been able to offer a range of public programs and services under modified conditions.

In light of the particular challenges related to COVID-19, a comprehensive Wellness Check with a standardized questionnaire was completed with these organizations. The Community Services Non-Profit Wellness Check Discussion Guide (Attachment 1) was designed to assess the wellbeing of these organizations in terms of finances, governance and the continued ability to deliver services.

Process/Methodology

Staff conducted meetings with 26 organizations (Attachment 2) in April and May 2021 and provided them with the Wellness Check Discussion Guide and Questionnaire to facilitate a discussion regarding the impacts of the pandemic on program and service delivery, human resources, governance, and finances. Each organization completed the questionnaire and conducted a self-assessment of their organizational outlook, using a 'green, yellow, red' rating system. The results were compiled and analyzed, and the key learnings or outcomes are summarized below.

Summary of Findings

Overall organizational wellness

- The Wellness Check demonstrated that the organizations are generally in a stable position, despite a challenging year.
- Based on a self-assessment, the vast majority of organizations identified that they are “confident” (green) or at least “optimistic” (yellow) that they will weather the pandemic relatively well.
- One organization identified that it is “very concerned” (red) about its organizational sustainability, but stated that this would be the case regardless of the pandemic. This organization is working with City staff to review their operations towards ensuring their long-term viability.
- A few organizations indicated areas of specific concern not necessarily related to COVID-19. Staff Liaisons to these organizations are aware of the challenges identified in the Wellness Checks and are working with them to address the situations.

Financial sustainability

- In 2021 (year to date), fourteen (14) organizations are reporting a surplus or break even operation. Eight (8) are reporting a deficit for 2021, which is more than in previous years.
- Organizations are concerned about reduced revenues and increased expenses as programs are reinstated. There is great uncertainty as to the rate at which people will return to participation which would impact revenues.
- Organizations that operate facilities independently from the City also expressed concern that they face additional costs related to time required to clean spaces and equipment along with the cost of purchasing cleaning supplies if PHO guidelines remain the same.
- Many organizations made it a point to identify that without the Canadian Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS), they would have large deficits.

- Some organizations that reported a surplus during the pandemic have both been successful at accessing additional grant funding and also have lower expenses than in a typical year due to the cancellation of events that are typically subsidized.
- Some organizations anticipate the need to adjust service levels or increase the price of programs to offset the potential reduction in participation. Another option some are considering is to increase the number of volunteer-led programs to reduce expenses.
- Some organizations identified that they will continue to strategically seek grant funding to sustain programs and services. However, one organization noted that it had been working towards being less reliant on grant funding, but is now forced to seek grant support given the pandemic.

Staff recruitment and retention

- During the pandemic, it was difficult for organizations to offer consistent employment given the uncertainty of shifting health orders and restrictions. There is concern that this may impact re-hiring and retention of staff.
- At the time the questionnaire was completed, organizations reported that over half of the part-time and casual positions that were filled at the beginning of the pandemic had not been recalled to work. Some individuals have found other work or left the field entirely, therefore it is anticipated that new staff will need to be recruited. Recruitment and training of new staff will take more time than bringing back experienced staff.

Board engagement and governance

- Limited impacts on governance were reported. Changes in board processes were noted, including a move to online meetings. There were also some organizations that reported postponing their Annual General Meeting.
- Some organizations identified or anticipated challenges with board recruitment.

Employee and volunteer health and wellness

- An area of common concern was overall wellness and in particular the mental health of staff, board members, and community members. While many organizations noted that they tried to be more responsive to mental health needs through flexible work schedules and regular staff check-ins, some smaller organizations reported that they did not have the tools or resources to support staff and volunteers.

Next Steps

The Wellness Check program demonstrated that most of the organizations that were consulted through this process have a relatively positive, if cautious, outlook on the overall sustainability of their organization. However, many strongly emphasized their reliance on wage subsidies and other operating grants in order to support them through the pandemic, and the uncertainty of how their operations would fare once emergency funding was no longer available.

Community Services staff are anticipating the potential and ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and will continue to work closely with the organizations in the areas of program and service delivery

planning, human resources, governance and finances. As a result of learnings from the Wellness Check program, staff will meet with the organizations and discuss strategies for working collaboratively to address the areas of concern identified, including:

- Program restoration and implementation;
- Staff and volunteer recruitment and retention;
- Employee health and wellness; and
- Board engagement and recruitment.

Finally, given the concern expressed by many of the non-profit organizations that it may take time for the full impacts of the pandemic to manifest, staff recommend conducting a follow up Wellness Check in nine to 12 months.

Financial Impact

No financial impact at this time.

Conclusion

The City holds service, lease and rental agreements with numerous non-profit community organizations that deliver a range of services to Richmond residents that contribute to community wellbeing, connection and vibrancy. The Wellness Check provided staff with valuable information about the overall health of these organizations.

The pandemic has been difficult for many organizations to navigate, given the evolving restrictions put in place to mitigate COVID-19 transmission. While these organizations have generally weathered the past year by adapting their programs and services, and with assistance from emergency funding sources, they remain cautiously optimistic as the full impacts of COVID-19 are still unknown. Staff will continue to monitor and support organizations as required in program and service delivery planning, human resources, governance and finances.



Donna Lee
Research Planner 2
(604-204-8908)

- Att. 1: Community Services Non-Profit Wellness Check Discussion Guide
2: List of Participating Non-profit Organizations

Community Services Non-Profit Wellness Check Discussion Guide

This discussion guide has been created by the City of Richmond to facilitate assessment and communication of the impacts of COVID-19 on the non-profit service delivery associations and societies that work closely with the Community Services Division. The questions are intended to assist City Staff to better understand current and future areas of concern for community associations and societies in relation to organizational well-being, particularly around service delivery, financial health and governance. Answers may be recorded in brief bullet points.

Data collected will primarily be accessible by the organization’s Staff Liaison and the Community Services Research Planner. Access to discussion notes may be limited to only City Staff who need this information (e.g. Staff Liaison, Research Planner, Managers). Staff Liaisons will continue following up with organizations, particularly if they express challenges or concerns, in order to gather more information if needed. Where possible, challenges will be addressed within existing budgets and service provision. Any sensitive information from individual associations or societies will not be discussed with other organizations.

The information gathered will be summarized into a report for the Community Services Division to provide a snapshot of the impacts of COVID-19 on organizations that work closely in service delivery with the Division, and their self-reported future outlook. Trends in difficulties and challenges, as well as promising practices and examples of adaptation and resilience will be highlighted.

A summary report may be presented to Council to provide a general overview of the overall wellness of service delivery associations and societies. Extraordinary concerns will be identified to Council in a separate communication process.

Should you have any questions about how the information will be used, please discuss with your Staff Liaison or contact Donna Lee, Research Planner (dlee2@richmond.ca, 604-204-8908).

Organization Name:	
Organizational Representative(s):	
Staff Liaison:	

Service Delivery

1. What current restrictions and modifications is your organization operating with? (select one)

- Open to the public (no changes to our facility operations)
- Open to the public under restricted conditions (please elaborate)
 - How have programs and services been modified to meet current COVID-19 restrictions?
 - Modifications to in-person programs (e.g. physical distancing, visitor capacity, engineering controls)
 - Shift to program delivery online
 - Shift to program delivery via phone
 - Shift to program delivery via drop off/pick up
 - Developed new programs/services (please indicate)
 - Other (please specify):

➢ What programs/services continue to be closed/ cancelled or indefinitely postponed?

- Full closure (no staff or public)

Not applicable: My organization does not operate a facility or provide programs/services

2. Moving forward, has your organization developed strategies or a plan to guide how programs and services will be delivered and/or prioritized in the future? (Yes / No / Not applicable)

Human Resources

3. Did you lay off staff during any shut-down period? (Yes / No / Not applicable)

	Regular Staff	Casual Staff
If yes, how many?		
For how long?		
How many staff remain laid-off?		

4. Please describe any other ways your staffing needs have changed since the onset of the pandemic. (Not applicable)

5. Looking ahead to the future, what are you most concerned about regarding staffing and/or volunteers as programs and services resume? (Not applicable)

➤ What strategies have you considered to address these concerns?

6. Does your organization have the tools it needs to support staff members through the ongoing challenges that COVID-19 has been presenting (e.g. health, mental health, other considerations)?

Governance

7. Since March 2020 (pre-COVID), how has COVID-19 affected your governance?

- Questioning future/ purpose of organization
- Revising governance structure/ board processes
- Considering mergers/ alliances
- Managing conflict
- Other (please specify)

No impact on governance

Financial Impact

Please provide a copy of the following to your Staff Liaison:

- Organization's most recent income statement and balance sheet
- Annual financial reports from the last 3 years (if not already submitted to the City)

8. Please provide the following summary of financial information for your organization. *Staff Liaisons: Please complete this information if you already have the documentation.*

	2018-19 (or 2018 if operating on	2019-20 (Pre-COVID) (or 2019 if operating on	2020-21 (or 2020 if operating on

	a calendar year)	a calendar year)	a calendar year)
Annual operating budget (\$)			
Revenue from all sources (\$)			
Surplus or (Deficit) (\$)			

9. How did the pandemic affect your ability to host revenue generating or fundraising opportunities that you normally rely on to supplement your annual operating costs (e.g. special events, annual fundraisers)?
 Not applicable)

➤ Did you develop any new strategies for fundraising?

10. Did you receive any of the following governmental and other supports?

- Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy
- BC Government Emergency Funds
- Canada Emergency Business Account
- Canada Temporary 10% Wage Subsidy
- Other emergency or relief funding (please identify funding source)
- Not applicable

➤ What barriers (if any) got in the way of accessing these supports?

11. Looking ahead to the future, what concerns you most about your organization’s financial situation or organizational sustainability?

➤ What strategies have you considered to address these concerns?

12. If the current environment continues, how long do you think you will be able to sustain your operations, before you would need to shut down your organization?

- Not a concern
- 1-2 years
- 7 months – 1 year
- 2+ years
- I don’t know

Organizational Self-Assessment

13. Please select the statement that best describes your organization’s ability to thrive given the current circumstances:

- Green ● – Our organization is handling each challenge as it arises, we have been able to modify operations to limit costs and access funding programs, and we are confident that we will be able to resume operations to pre-COVID levels with little concern.
- Yellow ■ – We are optimistic about the future but guarded about our ability to thrive. We have been limited in our ability to maintain or access revenue streams and we will need support to resume operations.
- Red ◆ – We are very concerned about the future and our ability to continue to operate without immediate support including funding support. Our organization is seriously considering options for the future, including the possibility of disbanding or merging with another organization.

14. Are there any other COVID-19-related impacts on your programs/services/activities, human resources, governance and/or finances not already covered that you would like us to be aware of?

List of Participating Non-profit Organizations

1. Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site Society
2. City Centre Community Association
3. East Richmond Community Association
4. Hamilton Community Association
5. London Heritage Farm Society
6. Minoru Seniors Society
7. Richmond Arenas Community Association
8. Richmond Art Gallery Association
9. Richmond Arts Coalition
10. Richmond Fitness and Wellness Association
11. Richmond Food Security Society
12. Richmond Gateway Theatre Society
13. Richmond Gymnastics Association
14. Richmond Lawn Bowling Club
15. Richmond Museum Society
16. Richmond Nature Park Society
17. Richmond Rod & Gun Club
18. Richmond Sharing Farm Society
19. Richmond Tennis Club
20. Scotch Pond Heritage Cooperative
21. Sea Island Community Association
22. South Arm Community Association
23. Steveston Community Society
24. Steveston Historical Society
25. Thompson Community Association
26. West Richmond Community Association