



Corporate

 NO: R169

Report

 COUNCIL DATE: July 22, 2002

REGULAR			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	July 19, 2002
FROM:	City Manager	FILE:	1850-SAS
SUBJECT:	"One-Time" Funding Request from Servants Anonymous Society (SAS)		

RECOMMENDATION

Council may consider any of the following options:

OPTION 1: Council not provide funding but strongly support their cause to the senior level of governments for funding.

OPTION 2: Council provide "one-time" funding from the Council Initiative Budget in the amount of \$6,600 for a "one-time" 3-month rental of "Grace House" in Surrey.

OPTION 3: Council provide "one-time" funding from the Council Initiative Budget in the amount of \$12,300, for a "one-time" 3-month rental of Grace House and the Learning Centre, as requested by SAS.

BACKGROUND

The Servants Anonymous Society (SAS) has requested "one-time" funding in the amount of \$12,300 to pay three months rent for both the Grace House and the Learning Centre. SAS provides a safe house for young girls exiting the sex trade, along with a Learning Centre which provides to them the necessary skills to cope in everyday life. This is the only facility of this kind in Surrey. A copy of their letter is attached.

The Mayor and the Chair, Public Safety Committee has asked the City Manager to report to Council on the options available to deal with this request.

DISCUSSION

Option 1

It should be noted that the mandate and responsibility for Social Services and Social Assistance is that of the senior governments. The annual provincial budget for social assistance & employment training is approximately \$1.9 billion. Further funding is also provided by the Ministry of Women's Equality that is specifically identified for women's health and social issues. However, local governments have limited taxing provisions which greatly restrict their abilities to go beyond their core mandate services. Contact with other Lower Mainland cities suggest that most have not become involved in directly funding third party agencies providing social services, with the possible exception of Vancouver.

Guided by the above basic review, it is concluded that Council not provide funding but strongly lend their support to SAS in requesting the senior level of governments to fund their needs. This conclusion is submitted as Option 1 in the recommendations.

Option 2 & 3

On the assumption that Council may wish to consider “one-time” financial assistance, a “very preliminary” review of SAS's financial balance sheet has been undertaken. It should be noted that the financial information provided by SAS is “unofficial” and “basic”. Their financial health is not good.

SAS is anticipating receiving very limited revenues, particularly over the next 3 to 4 months (i.e. July to October 2002). They have submitted a proposal to HRDC that would allow them to purchase the Safe House and expect this to be approved within the next 3 months. On this basis, they are requesting the City of Surrey to fund the 3-month rental. If this approval is not received, then the issue of “rental funding” will continue.

The financial issues, notwithstanding, SAS is not only providing much needed services, but is also contributing to lessening the “prostitution activities”. To this end, Council could consider providing “one-time” 3-month rental assistance for the Grace House only, or for both the Grace House and the Learning Centre. These are submitted as Options 2 and 3 in the recommendations. It should also be noted that that in 2002 Council approved an \$800 grant to SAS towards their Life Skills program from the City's grants budget.

CONCLUSION:

SAS has requested that the City provide “one-time” assistance in order to bridge a funding gap that has occurred. Requests such as these are operational in nature and the City has not provided such assistance in the past. SAS has indicated that their mandate to provide a safe house for young girls exiting the sex trade may be in jeopardy without some immediate assistance. Given these the circumstances, 3 options have been presented to Council for their consideration

Umendra Mital, P. Eng.

City Manager

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