



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Special Fund Request – Donation to the Heather Winterstein Foundation

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2024-07-10

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) authorizes a Special Fund request of \$1,000.00 to the Heather Winterstein Foundation.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to confirm the Board's approval of a \$1,000.00 Special Fund request to the Heather Winterstein Foundation in relation to the 6 tickets that were gifted to the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) for the Jelly Roll fundraising concert.
- Monies raised by this Foundation provide scholarships to Indigenous students studying nursing, pathology, and other medical disciplines.
- The event was held on July 8, 2024, at the Meridian Centre in St Catharines.

Financial Considerations

The Board has a discretionary pool of funds, which it uses for grants and donations. Disbursements from the fund are in accordance with guidelines provided in the Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA), and in Board By-Law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines. Section 258 (2) of the CSPA establishes that the Board has the sole authority for spending the proceeds from the sale of property which lawfully comes into the possession of the police service. The Act stipulates that "the Chief of Police may cause the property to be sold, and the Board may use the proceeds for any purpose that it considers in the public interest, including charitable donations." These funds do not form part of the police operating budget and are separate from the Regional tax base.

If the request is approved by the Board, the cheque can be made payable to the Heather Winterstein Foundation.

Analysis

Heather Winterstein was a resident of the Niagara Region when she tragically passed away in December 2021, after treatment at the St. Catharines Hospital site of the Niagara Health System. An inquest was called to investigate the circumstances of her death and a final report was released on August 28, 2023. One of the report's findings stated "Heather manifested some of the most acute symptoms of indigenous health inequities. She was marginalized, underhoused, and living in poverty. She arrived on both visits (to the hospital) by ambulance. The paramedic assessment and documentation for both visits may have introduced an unconscious bias that impacted Heather's care."

After Heather's untimely death, the Heather Winterstein Foundation was created. The Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to providing Indigenous youth support for mental health and addictions, protection against human trafficking, and scholarships to pursue a career as a health care professional. The Foundation honours the legacy of Heather Winterstein by advocating for equitable health care services and actively works to reduce service disparities.

World famous musical artist Jelly Roll will be performing for the first time in Canada at a fundraising concert to support the Heather Winterstein Foundation. An invitation has been extended to the NRPS to attend in support of the Winterstein family and 6 tickets have been provided for free.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

This is a community engagement event that allows members of the NRPS the opportunity to attend the fundraising concert at the invitation of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre. This invitation is the result of a lot of effort to build a relationship with the Indigenous community. This is related to the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Goal 2: Community Engagement and Collaboration - Objective 1.0 To strengthen relationships and build trust with our community. This enhances the image of the Service and its members by showing support for the Winterstein family and the broader Indigenous community in the Niagara Region. Attending this fundraiser will continue to build the trust relationship being developed by the NRPS Indigenous Liaison Officers.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-Law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines

Other Pertinent Reports

Not applicable

This report was prepared by Jeff Bootsma, Staff Sergeant, Community Engagement reviewed by Shaun Parrent, Inspector, 2 District, reviewed by Mario Lagrotteria, Superintendent, District Operations. Recommended by Darrin Forbes, Acting Deputy Chief, Support Services.



Submitted by:

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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable