



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Services Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Special Fund Donation for the Out of the Cold Program
Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board
Report Date: 2024-10-03

Recommendation

That the Niagara Police Services Board approve a Special Fund donation of \$2,000.00 for the Out of the Cold dinner program to assist with offsetting costs attributed to running this event.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for a \$2,000.00 Special Fund donation for the Out of the Cold dinner program to assist with offsetting costs attributed to running this program to feed the homeless and vulnerable.
- Out of the Cold is a volunteer driven program operating annually out of many host churches across the City of St. Catharines from November to March.
- The program operates by enlisting volunteers to provide meals for the homeless and the vulnerable in our community.
- While the host churches provide their facilities for free, running the program is dependent on volunteers and donations to offset rising costs.

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 (CSPA), and also with Board By-law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines. Section 258 (2) of the CSPA establishes that the Niagara Police Service 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.

In 2014, the Board donated \$300.00 to the program. In 2016, the Board increased its donation to the program to \$500.00, and this annual donation amount remained consistent until 2022. In 2023, the Board increased its donation to the program to

\$1,500.00. Due to the rising costs of living and the rise in homelessness in our Region, it is requested that the Board increase its donation to \$2,000.00.

The request for \$2,000.00 will greatly assist to offset the rising costs of food and supplies to prepare and serve hot meals to the homeless and vulnerable. This request falls within the guidelines of the Police Services Board By-Law 392-2021. If this request is approved by the Board, the cheque can be made payable to the “Out of the Cold Program – Knox Presbyterian Church”.

Analysis

Out of the Cold is a volunteer driven program operating out of many host churches across St. Catharines from November to March annually. The program provides warm nutritious meals for the needy and homeless in our community. There are many people across Niagara living outdoors, in an emergency shelter or in transitional housing. While host churches provide free facilities, the cost of running the program is dependent on donations and volunteers.

The program operates from the following St. Catharines locations;

Sunday: Knights of Columbus Hall, 235 Church Street
Monday: Silver Spire United Church, 366 St. Paul Street
Tuesday: Cathedral of St. Catherine, 3 Lyman Street
Wednesday: St. George’s Anglican Church, 83 Church Street
Thursday: St. Alfred Roman Catholic Church, 272 Vine Street
Friday: Knox Presbyterian Church, 53 Church Street
Saturday: Queen Street Baptist Church, 57 Queen Street

During the 2023-2024 campaign, the Niagara Regional Police Service assisted the Out of the Cold program from Knox Presbyterian Church, 53 Church Street, St. Catharines on November 17, 2023, December 8, 2023, January 19, 2024, February 16, 2024, and March 15, 2024. In total, Members of the Service and their families filled 33 volunteer positions and assisted the program in serving an average of approximately 120 meals per night.

The plight of the homeless is revealed on a more personal level to the volunteers who are engaged in conversations with them. Through this program, NRPS volunteers play a key role in providing friendly human contact to the homeless, and they regularly comment on the gratifying experience it provides. For the 2024-2025 campaign, the program is seeking 30 volunteers from the NRPS.

Alternatives Reviewed

To not support this request.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

Supporting the Out of the Cold Program directly aligns with the objective to enhance supports for vulnerable persons under the goal of Community Engagement and Collaboration in our 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan. Similarly, by volunteering their time to participate in this program, our members are also clearly demonstrating our commitment to strengthen relationships and continue to build trust with our community.

Relevant Policy Considerations

By-Law 392-2021, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines.

Other Pertinent Reports

Minute No. 267.2014 - Special Fund Request – Out of the Cold Dinner Program
Minute No. 231-2016 - Special Fund Request – Out of the Cold Dinner Program
Minute No. 9.4 – 12.15.2022 – Special Fund Request – Out of the Cold Dinner Program
Minute No. 9.2 – 11.23.23 – Special Fund Request – Out of the Cold Program

This report was prepared by Danny Savoie, Acting Inspector, Chief's Office and reviewed by Bill Fordy, Chief of Police.



Submitted by:
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Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable