



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Special Fund Request – Socks for Change Program.
Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board
Report Date: 2025-01-30

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board (Board) approve a Special Fund request of \$1,500.00 for the Socks for Change program to assist with offsetting costs attributed to running this charitable organization.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for a \$1,500.00 Special Fund donation for the Socks for Change program to assist with offsetting costs attributed to manufacturing or purchasing woolen socks and winter accessories.
- Socks for Change is a charitable program providing warm woolen socks, gloves, toques, and other winter accessories to the homeless and disadvantaged throughout the winter season.
- The program has many community partners including Community Care of St. Catharines, the Out of the Cold Program, Project Share, the Hope Centre, Port Cares, and Start Me Up Niagara.
- The Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) has supported Socks for Change since 2018.

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.

The request for \$1,500.00 will serve to offset the costs of manufacturing or purchasing socks, gloves, toques, or other winter accessories to be distributed to the homeless and disadvantaged in our Region. This request falls within the guidelines of the Board By-Law 403-2024.

If this request is approved by the Board, the cheque can be made payable to “Socks for Change”.

Analysis

Started in 2017, Socks for Change is a charitable program providing warm woolen socks and winter accessories to people in need throughout the winter season. The Socks for Change program partners with many community agencies including Community Care of St. Catharines, the Out of the Cold Program, Project Share, the Hope Centre, Port Cares, and Start Me Up Niagara, to just name a few.

Since its inception, the Socks for Change charitable organization has been able to donate over 250,000 woolen socks, toques, gloves, and neck tubes to various community-minded organizations for distribution to those most in need. Socks for Change delivered woolen socks and winter accessories to more than 60 shelters and charitable organizations in Niagara, more than 100 schools, and to Niagara EMS. Importantly, the Socks for Change Program recognized the engagement the NRPS has with the homeless and the vulnerable in our community, and since the 2018/2019 winter season, the Service has received thousands of pairs of socks and winter accessories to be redistributed to those in Niagara who require these items most.

The socks and accessories are received by the Service’s Quartermaster Stores Unit and distributed to all Districts Supply Clerks for placement in Service vehicles, and the eventual distribution to those in need by members of the Service. The socks and accessories are also supplied to the Prisoner Management Unit to supply to those in need.

In 2018, the Board approved a \$1,000.00 donation to Socks for Change. In 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2023 the Board approved \$1,500.00 donations to the Socks for Change program.

Alternatives Reviewed

To not support this request.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

Supporting the Socks for Change Program directly aligns with the objectives to enhance supports for vulnerable persons, directly 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.

Relevant Policy Considerations

By-Law 403-2024 – A By-Law Respecting the Administration, Limitations and Guidelines of the Special Fund.

Other Pertinent Reports

9.2 – 2023.12.14 - Special Fund Request – Socks for Change Program.

9.5 – 2022.12.15 - Special Fund Request – Socks for Change Program.

8.1 – 2020.12.10 - Special Fund Request – Socks for Change Program.

This report was prepared by Nilan Davé, Executive Officer to the Chief, and reviewed by Bill Fordy, Chief of Police.



Submitted by:
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Acting Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable.