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**TO:** Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Sharon Bristol Director, Community Living

**DATE:** April 5, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Youth Free Ice Rental - reallocation of ice time fees

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**ORIGIN:** Staff was asked to compile background on the No Fee Ice rental impact and evaluate other opportunities to use the revenue

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** MGA 65A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if (a) the expenditure is included in the municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the municipality;

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council approve the budget reallocation of \$60,000 of free ice time rental to Poverty, Community Grants, Diversity/Inclusion and Events as outlined below

**BACKGROUND:** At a special meeting held at the Amherst Stadium on August 9, 2016, Amherst Town Council approved a new Ice Allocation Policy which provided guidelines for ice rental and usage of the stadium. As a part of the Ice Allocation Policy, Amherst Town Council committed to and enhanced its continued support and investment towards physical activity in youth.

A **pilot project** was created for the 2016-2017 ice season that would see ice rental fees waived for youth programs (age 18 and under), which included the Amherst Skating Club and Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association. The intent of the pilot project was that organizations will pass the equivalent ice cost savings to their members, resulting in reduced registration fees. The pilot project is funded through the Town's Operating Reserve.

The objective of the policy is to provide guidelines for ensuring fair and equitable ice time that will allow for optimal utilization of the facility. The 2016-2017 pilot project was anticipated to maintain and potentially increase youth programs enrolment as a result of affordability and accessibility for users.

Based on the ice usage for 2015-2016 Amherst Skating Club was expected to save approximately \$18,000. and Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association to save approximately \$40,000. in the 2016-2017 season.

This unconventional initiative gained attention throughout the Province and County by receiving support from various stakeholders who were intrigued by the initiative and Amherst Town Councils forward thinking on engaging youth in physical activity.





## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Here are the registration numbers for conversation if needed for CCMHA during No Fee Ice.

2016 to 2017 - 272

2017 to 2018 - 306 \*\*\* This is the year that high school team folded so they added 25 players mid season

2018 to 2019 - 292

2019 - 2020 - 317

2020 to 2021 - 318

2021 to 2022 - 296

2022 to 2023 - 262

Registration numbers were for the Amherst Skating Club have been requested in February and March, however no information has yet been received.

**DISCUSSION:** The above no fee ice time has in fact not met the desired outcome in terms of the minor hockey registrations.

It is further noted that with our efforts to make the Town of Amherst more inclusive and equitable for all citizens that this allocation of funds does not provide assistance to a wide variety of Amherst citizens, rather a select few. Furthermore, the Town does not have the ability to control the budget of these organizations and therefore cannot guarantee that the impact of the program is continuing.

Staff feel that the cost of this program can be better utilized and impact a more diverse people by reallocating it by:

1. Creating physical activity opportunities at all of our organized events;
2. Creating new events for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity;
3. Adding an Inclusion, Diversity and Equity component to existing events;
4. Adding funds to our poverty initiatives;
5. Adding funds to Community Support Grants;
6. Creating new and expanding existing active living initiatives.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** Overall none, this is merely a reallocation of funds to a more diverse and equitable balance within the Community Support Area Rate.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** Many. Reallocation of these funds will allow more people to benefit over a diverse spectrum of our community. Issues such as food insecurity, diversity and inclusion, youth outreach and education can be strengthened





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**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** none

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Continued as we move towards assisting a broader scope of individuals and community organizations

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Keep allocation as is
2. Phase out the program over two years

**ATTACHMENTS:**

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Report prepared by:

Report and Financial approved by:

