

## **Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**

### **Corporate Services**

### **Information Report**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Leanne Segeren-Swayze, Director, Customer Services  
**Date:** July 29, 2020  
**Subject:** Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall Club

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This report is for the information of Council.

#### **Background**

On May 25, 2020, the following Notice of Motion was approved by Council:

“Whereas Council has made an effort and commitment to support community groups across Chatham-Kent. And whereas the Municipality has worked in partnership with the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Club for several years to handle bookings for their community centre. And whereas this Public Use Agreement with the Kinsmen is set to expire this year. Therefore be it resolved that administration investigate and provide options for Council to consider for this event booking agreement to continue, not only with the Wallaceburg Kinsmen, but with other community groups across Chatham-Kent. A staff report will be brought back before Council on or before the August 10, 2020 Council meeting.”

#### **Comments**

In 2009, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Municipality) entered into a 10-year agreement with the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall Club in relation to a funding grant. The agreement specifically outlined renovation grant specifications with the facility and the responsibilities of the club for ongoing management and operations of the centre. In exchange for municipal use through Recreation and Community Engagement Services (recreation programs) and access to the facility, the agreement also outlined a “services in lieu” clause. Essentially, the agreement allowed the space for municipal recreational programs in exchange for the temporary booking support through the duration of the agreement. Upon the commencement of the agreement, Recreation and Community Engagement Services required additional facility space for their programming, however this is no longer the case. The Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall is infrequently rented by the Municipality for recreation programs, due to the availability of municipal facilities. In the last year this facility has been used nine (9) times for municipal purposes.

The overall number of hall bookings from 2012 to 2015 inclusive were high. There was a decline in 2016 and 2017 but an upward trend had been experienced in 2018 and again in 2019. The bookings have primarily been coordinated by the Wallaceburg customer service representatives and the municipal facilities staff (bookings, deposits, keys, returned deposits, cancellations, enquiries, contracts, payments, remittances, communication of bookings, reports, etc.).

Prior to the “services in lieu” agreement, Recreation and Community Engagement Services’ anticipated facility requirements, time allocation and booking volumes associated with customer service representatives were unknown. At that time customer service representative related tasks were therefore temporarily absorbed within the customer service staffing complement until the workload could be assessed based on statistics. The administrative function for the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall bookings is not complicated but does compete with the time required for staff to meet the customer demands of core municipal services. Our current staff complement is not rightsized to accommodate the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall transactions, attracting overtime to complete core services. See additional detail in the statistics section below.

In addition, the customer service division has implemented service enhancements (counter and call centre services) in municipal centres within this 10-year period in response to business planning and service reviews. These enhancements have, in some cases, eliminated customers having to commute to Chatham to access the municipal services meaning that transaction/service volumes have been spread out more evenly between offices, including the Wallaceburg office. (We expect the implementation of 311 in October of 2020 to further increase customer service volume.)

On January 27, 2020 the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club was notified of administration’s decision to not renew the agreement. This decision was based on several reasons:

- a) the Municipality no longer uses the facility to operate municipal recreation programs,
- b) the increase in administrative time spent on non-municipal services as event bookings increased,
- c) that managing bookings for private/non-profit organizations is not a core municipal service and not extended to any other organization, and
- d) that the cost associated with providing this service had never been budgeted.

A contract extension was provided until June of 2020 to assist the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall executive the chance to transition.

On April 27, 2020, administration held a virtual meeting with the club to discuss the transition of the services back to the management of the hall, as well as suggestions and support to ensure a successful transfer. In addition to offering this support, administration agreed to extend the contract a second time to October 1, 2020 to again allow the hall management additional time to prepare for the transfer, and given that no event bookings could take place due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic this would allow ample time for both parties to effect the change.

The administrative processes involved with offering this service encompasses the following:

- facility general enquiries (size, cost, insurance, contract, cleaning requirements, key exchange, availability, etc.)
- verifying availability; registering the renter information; explaining insurance requirements/options; processing payment/receipt; contract prep/signing; key deposit; key exchange
- key/deposit return (usually difficulty with the keys being returned during our office hours, so significant effort to make contact for key to be returned)
- analysis of the rental payments collected on behalf of the Kinsmen Hall on a quarterly basis including cheque requisition for remittance to hall
- regular visits from hall manager during office hours requesting rental statistics, scheduling their own club rental times, etc.

### Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall Statistics

The annual municipal administrative time to provide this service to the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club is estimated to be 415 hours or a 0.23 full time equivalent. Of the estimated 415 annual hours allocated to the delivery of booking services from the Wallaceburg Municipal Centre, approximately 160 hours are categorized as overtime hours in order to deliver core municipal services. As demonstrated in the chart below, the booking volume and revenue fluctuates greatly and with increased volume, we experience increased workload to manage the bookings/enquiries.

Upon the commencement of the agreement many factors were unknown; booking volumes, municipal time required to complete the bookings, expected use for recreation programs etc. Resulting from the unknown factors, additional staff were not hired and the hours required to provide the private service were absorbed with the current complement for the entirety of the contract

Per the agreement, a \$2.00 per booking commission is paid to the Municipality for performing the work. This commission is intended to subsidize the cost of providing this service on behalf of the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club. At peak volume, the annual municipal recovery (based on \$2.00/booking) is \$442. The annual cost to the Municipality to provide this service is approximately \$16,500. The club itself has collected an average of \$6,257 in revenues annually in the last eight (8) years and at peak volume is \$11,732.

Year	# of External Bookings	# of Municipal Program Bookings	Revenue for CK (\$2.00/booking fee)	Revenue Collected / Remitted to Hall
2012	459	6	\$86.00	\$3,882.36
2013	937	7	\$94.00	\$3,905.41
2014	551	7	\$102.00	\$4,994.72
2015	695	2	\$138.00	\$7,712.22
2016	147	10	\$94.00	\$5,052.98
2017	241	23	\$148.00	\$6,388.92
2018	338	21	\$418.00	\$6,389.06
2019	385	9	\$442.00	\$11,732.00

As you will see from the chart on the previous page, recreation services rarely used the facility for any bookings and have indicated they do not expect to continue using the facility in the future.

### Community Group Event Booking Options

Chatham-Kent is home to 50+ private halls, gyms, church halls, facilities with the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club being the only one the Municipality provides booking assistance for. All other private facilities manage their operations including: inquiries, contracts, deposits, key exchanges, payments, refunds, complaints, etc., and have not requested the administrative assistance of the Municipality. Many of the facilities engage the assistance of students, volunteers, telephone/voicemail/email communication with renters, during specific hours of operation based on volunteer availability, etc.

On-line booking software is an option to the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall and others who are seeking an approach to simplify bookings. Administration explored self-service facility booking options. Various software options are available for purchase, each based specifically on desired specifications to suit facilities. An electronic booking system would allow the renter to choose available hall time and access all necessary details/information versus contacting the Kinsmen Hall.

Based on our research, we obtained the following overview of options (as examples):

- Quick Base (approx. \$50/month)
- FMX (costs dependent upon desired software function)
- UpKeep (approx. \$35-180/month)
- Shedda Bookings (approx. \$35/month)
- Office Space Software (costs dependent upon desired software function)
- ARCHIBUS (costs dependent upon desired software function)
- RecTimes (approx. \$149-249/month)
- PerfectMind (costs dependent upon desired software function)

Shared access to municipal facility booking software was also explored but due to network security and privacy of information laws, this is not an option.

As noted in the chart below, municipalities generally do not provide facility-booking services for private/community organizations.

Location	Private Hall Bookings
City of Brantford	No
City of London	No
City of Sarnia	No
City of Windsor	No
Municipality of Leamington	No

## **Options for Consideration**

- Option 1. That the Municipality continue providing booking services to the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club at an approximate 2020 cost to the Municipality of \$16,500/year for administrative staff and that this service and rate along with any future requests for this service be reviewed by council annually during budget deliberations.
- Option 2. That the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club commence self-administering their event bookings in October 2020 following transition assistance/training from municipal staff with respect to work flows and best practices of booking events and recommendations with regard to potential software for on-line bookings. This transition assistance may include providing a contribution of up to \$2,000 towards the purchase of an on-line booking software should the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club purchase same.

In conclusion, the intent of the 10-year agreement was to approve a grant for the facility specific to renovations and construction. The terms of the agreement also identified the trade-off of hall space to conduct municipal recreation programs in lieu of booking assistance, for the 10-year duration. The renovations are complete and recreation programs no longer require the space.

Options to consider continuing event booking agreement for the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club essentially revolve around the funding of municipal staff wages to continue providing the service. However, if the ultimate goal is to ensure that the Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall club have support to be self-sustainable into the future there are options to assist their volunteers to prepare for this. If Council wish to explore expanding municipal services to include providing event bookings for private organizations an analysis of scope and cost would need to be conducted and included in a future budget deliberation.

## **Consultation**

The following were consulted during the preparation of this information report:

- Manager, Recreation & Community Engagement Services
- Director, Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries
- Wallaceburg Kinsmen Hall Club

## **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications related directly to this information report.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

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Cathy Hoffman, MPA, CHRL  
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Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

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