

Staff Report

Report To: City Council

Report From: Kate Allan Director of Corporate Services
Pam Coulter Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: November 7, 2022

Report Code: CR-22-100

Subject: Safe and Sound extended hours through winter 2023 – financial support request

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-22-100 respecting Safe and Sound extended hours through winter 2023 – financial support request, City Council approves funding in the amount of \$25,000 to be paid from the surplus anticipated for the 2022 fiscal year.

Highlights:

- Safe n Sound provides safe emergency shelter and support for homeless people in partnership with community services and public education and advocacy for homelessness prevention.
- Through the City's financial support of \$25,000 in partnership with Grey County, Safe n Sound will operate with extended hours, including weekends, from November 14th through the end of March 2023.
- 2,427 participants were served by Safe n Sound in the months of November through March 2022.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Previous Report/Authority:

None

Background:



Providing and supporting housing choice by unit size, type and ownership that is affordable and attainable throughout the continuum requires coordinated and co-operative effort between many stakeholders, levels of government, agencies, developers, NPF's and individual residents.

The City's new Official Plan has a goal to be a welcoming, safe and supportive community and an objective to apply a diversity lens to all decisions and work to capture opportunities to address homelessness and combat inequity in the built environment and planning policy. The City is currently working on a report to implement the policies relating to housing from the new Official Plan (2022) in the City's Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw as well as other tools that can be impacted at the municipal level such as the Community Improvement Plan. It merits note, that of all building permits issued in the last 5 years for new housing, 23% have been affordable within the City.

In the County of Grey, the County provides Housing Services across the county to 8 lower tiers. As the Consolidated System Service Manager, Grey County is responsible for providing affordable, temporary and emergency housing for those experiencing homelessness in our community.

In September the County took on the direct oversight and administration of the Grey County Short Term Shelter Program. Safe n Sound (a local non profit organization located in the River District) provides a drop in location which allows participants experiencing homelessness to access the opportunity to contact 211. After the hours of 4:30PM and on weekends 211

is contracted by Grey County to help with possible motel placements where rooms are available. In addition, the space provides a warm space, peer counselling, access to laundry, washrooms, light food and drinks.

On September 30th, City staff received a request from Safe n Sound through Grey County to aid in offsetting the direct financial cost of remaining open for extended hours through the winter season. Safe n Sound would normally close at 3 pm leaving participants unsupported until approximately 9 am when morning programming becomes available through community partners.

Following the closure of the space individuals who are able to be connected with the Counties Short Term Shelter Program are provided with transportation options to the motel. Grey County Housing staff person connects with them on the next business day to work on a housing plan.

The financial request will allow Safe n Sound to remain open until 10 pm every day including weekends through the coldest months of the year.

Through social services relief funding received in 2021, the County was able to fully support the additional financial requirements to offer extended hours last year. During those months 2,427 participants were served.

Analysis:

Historically the City has provided financial support for Safe n Sound to remain open for extended hours only during cold weather advisories. The financial cost of that support has been included in annual operating results.

City staff received a breakdown of the total cost for providing extended hours. The additional staff time and food expenses for the entire period is estimated to be \$49,473. Grey County has indicated that they will match the funding to cover the remaining half.

Supporting this request to support the County and Safe n Sound in the work they do is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan and Official Plan. This coordinated effort that avoids duplication of service is encouraged by the Community Safety and Well Being Plan.

Financial Implications:

The current year's request of \$25,000 can be funded by the estimated year-end surplus.

There is not currently a request for permanent funding however Council may wish to consider ongoing financial support to the same or similar initiatives as part of budget deliberations in early 2023.

Communication Strategy:

The County uses 211 and has staff who do outreach. People who are homeless are also connected to service through agencies including Grey Paramedics, the Outreach as well as Owen Sound Police Service.

Consultation:

Housing Programs Manager, Grey County

Attachments:

None.

Recommended by:

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact kallan@owensound.ca