Notes from the Hamilton Future Fund Grant Process Review Working Group (DRAFT)

Meeting Date: March 3, 2020

In Attendance: John Kirkpatrick,
Tara Crugnale,
Nrinder Nann,
Sonja Macdonald

General Issues:

- **Staff Resources:**

  o The clerk is the only staff assigned to the Future Fund for application intake/organization, coordinating the Board activities, and following up on funding and reporting from successful applicants.

  o Is there a way to access additional staff resources to assist? If not, in what ways can the Future Fund process make use of opportunities from other staff activities, e.g. Enrichment Fund

    ▪ One example included exploring if information about the Future Fund could be included when the Enrichment Fund host information events in the community to better represent the difference between the two funds.

  o Use of streamlined and online application process with specific questions lengths etc, will, hopefully, make the application intake process easier. In cases where a paper application form is required, it should be a print-out form that mirrors the online process.

- **Clarify scope of funding**: one-time capital investment.

  o One time – discreet, targeted at 1 project only for a fixed period of time

  o Capital – about investing in tangible things, e.g upgrades, needed resources, etc, not for staff salaries or ongoing operational fees.

- Establish a fixed date/period for Future Fund applications, stagger this with the timing of the City's Enrichment Fund

- **Reporting**: Desire to establish a template for those who receive funding to report back, including fixed timelines, e.g. report back at 6 months, and/or 1 year.

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- Idea of a hold back for funding tied to reporting was also mentioned and it was suggested that we introduce a hold back on larger sum grants, with the caveat of clear reporting on how first packet of $ is spent.

- **Application evaluation process**: in evaluating the applications, when there are several related to a specific field or area, seek input from City staff at the first Future Fund meeting where the applications are being discussed. For example, if several applications are received for sports or recreational funding, a briefing from the Director of Recreation regarding the City's Recreational Master Plan would be helpful for FF volunteer advisory committee members.

- Simplified, streamlined, online application process:

Proposed Framework for a revised application & evaluation:

More detailed and specific application with clear indication about the types of projects that will be accepted. Examples of how to streamline/simplify the application process can be found in the Ontario Trillium Fund applications below (see additional resources). A draft framework follows:

Proposed Revised Application Questions – For Consideration

1. Organization Name:

2. Organization Contact Info:

3. Project Name:

4. Short Project Description: (max 150 words)

5. Requested $ amount:

6. Min/Max $ amount:

7. Have you completed/included all parts of the application required: Y/N
   Include a statements – Please note that your application will not be reviewed if you have not completed ALL parts of the application.

   a. Check boxes for the following items – Project workplan/timeline, project budget, financial statements, proof of incorporation/letters patent, board of directors,

8. Detailed Project Explanation (w/ work plan/milestones and timeline) (max 3 pages):

9. Detailed Project Budget (aligns with work plan and timeline):

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10. Please explain [or click] how your project addresses the following principles of the Future Fund.

    a. Community Benefit:

        i. Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

        ii. Environmental sustainability

        iii. Poverty Reduction

    b. Economic Prosperity

        i. Positive Impact on local economic development

        ii. Support community/neighbourhood economic development

        iii. Supporting employment opportunities for priority equity groups (e.g. Women, Indigenous, Black, Racialized, LGBTQ2+ individuals)

        iv. Supporting training and skills development for priority equity groups (see list above), as well as residents living with low income

    c. Community Partnership

        i. Have you identified other community/neighbourhood partners with which to work on this project?

        ii. Do you have investment (in kind or financial) from other partners? If so who?

        iii. Are other partners assisting with the project delivery? If so, in which ways.

    d. Project Sustainability

        i. What are the measurable long-term impacts of your project

        ii. Is there a return on investment (ROI) for this project in terms of

            1. Employment

            2. Training

            3. Revenue

11. Additional Organization Information:

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a. Organization's Staff: List names and short bios of key staff

b. Board of Directors: List of Board of Directors

c. Financial Statements: Most recent year's financial statement

d. Proof of Incorporation/Letters patent (e.g. non-profit or charity)

Point System: Introducing a point system for application review, similar to what is in place for the Enrichment Fund would help to increase transparency, as well as provide volunteer board members with a clearer direction on which applications should be funded. The points system should align with the questions asked in the application process (see above). The following is an <u>example</u> of how the Ontario Trillium Foundation employs a point system for its grant evaluation. This is included in the application process, so that applicants know what the grant reviewers are looking for.

[Example] OTF Seed Grant Project Assessment
Lastly, Seed projects are scored based on the information submitted in the Project section of the application. The three assessment areas are: Strategy, Process, People. Each assessment area has a series of accompanying application questions and assessment considerations, and are scored as follows:

SCORE: -2 (SD: Strongly Disagree) -1 (D: Disagree) 0 (N: Neutral) +1 (A: Agree) +2 (SA: Strongly Agree

Assessment Area	Assessment Considerations	Application Questions
Strategy (50%)	The strategy appropriately identifies the need or opportunity as well as an overall plan designed to achieve the identified learning. • There is alignment between the project need, project purpose and the selected Grant Result. • The project purpose is clearly stated and understood. • The project need or opportunity and who will benefit is clearly presented and understood. • Photos or diagrams demonstrate funding needs.	• What is your project and what do you want to do? Why is your project needed, and why is now the right time to be doing it? Who will benefit from the project? • Where will the project take place? • How does the project align with the Grant Result you selected? • Does your project have a capital component (equipment)?

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Process (25%)	The project is well thought out and identifies the activities and steps needed to achieve the identified learning	
	• The activities are aligned with the project purpose. • It is feasible to carry out the activities in the stated timelines. • The budget is appropriate to carry out the activities and learning plan. • If applicable, contributions from collaborative and/or partnering organization(s) support project implementation.	• What are the key project activities that you will complete in order to successfully implement the project? • If applicable, list the collaborative organizations identified in your Collaborative Agreement. • If applicable, list any organizations you are partnering with to make this project a success. Describe each organization's contribution to the project (i.e., financial, time, location, space, etc.) and indicate the status of the partnership.
People (25%)	People and organizations will learn from this project.	
	• The expected learning is clearly stated. • There is a plan in place to use and/or share the learning. • The learning plan is appropriate for the project purpose.	• What do you expect to learn from this project? • What key questions will you need to answer to achieve your expected learning? • How will you capture the learning and how will you use it?
Total		

Additional Resources supporting the revised Application process:

The following are resources that were consulted in developing this proposed approach. Where possible, City of Hamilton Policies, Plans and Procedures were consulted.

• City of Hamilton, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (Draft) (Feb 2019), https://www.hamilton.ca/government-information/news-centre/news-releases/city-develop-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-plan

• City of Hamilton, Urban Indigenous Strategy, https://www.hamilton.ca/urban-indigenous-strategy

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- City of Hamilton, Clean and Green Hamilton Strategy, https://www.hamilton.ca/clean-green-hamilton-strategy

- City of Hamilton, Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/housing-homelessness-action-plan

- City of Hamilton, City Enrichment Fund, https://www.hamilton.ca/community-funding-grant-programs/city-enrichment-fund/city-enrichment-fund

  o The assessment criteria and point values for successful applications differ based on the subject area chosen, that said, there are clear examples in each area "handbook" about the assessment process and points system.

- Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) resources:

  o OTF processes: https://otf.ca/how-we-work/fair-transparent-and-accountable-processes

  o Seed assessment: https://otf.ca/sites/default/files/seed_assessment.pdf

  o Grow assessment: https://otf.ca/sites/default/files/grow_assessment.pdf

  o Capital assessment: https://otf.ca/sites/default/files/capital_assessment2.pdf