

HH grants \$4,000 to groups

By Sarah Sobanski

The following are brief reports of items discussed during a March 7 meeting of Hastings Highlands council.

Hastings Highlands has chosen its grant recipients for 2018.

Council approved six of seven applications for its 2018 Miscellaneous Grant Program. The grant allocates \$4,000 from the 2018 budget for charitable organizations and not-for-profit community groups to provide new and improved programs, initiatives and events that benefit the residents of Hastings Highlands, according to council's meeting agenda.

The Bancroft Area Stewardship Council received \$750, the same it did last year through the program.

The Lake St. Peter Community Centre Group received \$200. Council contributed \$400 to the organization in 2017, \$100 in 2016 and \$50 in both 2015 and 2014.

North Hastings Music Festival will receive \$100, the same as it did last year. It received \$50 in 2014-'16.

Hastings Highlands Municipal Election All Candidates Meeting received \$220 to waive the rental fee for Emond Hall and any other charges that might apply to hosting the meeting.

The remaining money was split between the Fit for Living Co-operative Group and North Hastings Fish Hatchery ? \$1,365 each. Council divided what was left because it felt both were deserving, but both asked for nearly as much or more than what was budgeted for the grant program.

Council enters into agreement with OCWA

Council approved a three-year \$15,531 contract with the Ontario Clean Water Agency for its water sampling services.

According to the background on the contract, the municipality needed someone to sample the water available at its 17 municipal buildings. OCWA was the only agency that met the requirements of the tender.

Business retention co-ordinator position outlined

Council is preparing to post the position for its business retention and expansion implementation co-ordinator and economic development/tourism strategy leader.

Late last year the Community Futures Development Corporation of North and Central Hastings and South Algonquin and council teamed up to fund an economic development strategy and, by extension, someone to co-ordinate it with the Rural Economic Development grant.

The co-ordinator will develop and begin implementing a strategic plan for community expansion following findings from previous business development, and tourism surveys and initiatives, in the community. These include 2015's Business Retention and Expansion survey campaign with local businesses and the First Impressions Community Exchange where community members from Muskoka Lakes provided their impressions of the community. Also, 2017's Tourism Brainstorming Event.

Bird's Creek subdivision plan approved

Council approved the Bird's Creek Concept Plan for the Bird's Creek Forest Subdivision.

Dillon Consulting's Ottawa office manager Rory Baksh attended council in November 2017 with a concept plan for the subdivision, which is a 71-hectare parcel of land west of Hwy 62 and east of Y Road, on the western side of the residential area of Mira Street to across from Enterprise Crescent.