

# Staff Report

Presented By: Kara Van Myall, CAO  
Meeting Date: May 27, 2024  
Subject: Government Relations – Wellington Dupont Contract  
Attachment(s): None

---

## **Recommendation**

That Council approve the allocation of \$50,000 from the Future Capital Reserve to extend the contract of Wellington Dupont for government relations until December 31, 2024; and

That Council direct staff to add future government relations funding to the 2025 Business Plan for consideration.

---

## **Report Summary**

Wellington Dupont was brought on in 2023 to support the Town of Saugeen Shores in its pursuit of funding for the Aquatic and Wellness Centre (AWC). Since that time, the scope of work has broadened from the AWC to encompass other funding projects as well as general advocacy. This report outlines the current and proposed support from Wellington Dupont and asks Council to approve the extension of contract to December 31, 2024. The \$50,000 will be funded through the Future Capital Reserve as the majority of the grants are capital projects and will offset any net new funding secured.

## **Background/Analysis**

Wellington Dupont was brought on board in 2023 as detailed in two Council reports [March 13, 2023](#) and [May 23, 2023](#). Originally, the government relations firm was brought on board solely to support the pursuit of funding for the Aquatic and Wellness Centre (AWC) and specifically the Town's application to the Green and Inclusive Community Build (GICB) Fund for just over \$13 million. Since that time, the scope of work has broadened from the AWC to encompass other funding projects as well as general advocacy within both the provincial and federal governments on important issues to Saugeen Shores. This report outlines the current and proposed supports from Wellington Dupont and asks Council to approve an extension to their contract until December 31, 2024, as per the Town's Purchasing Policy (Section 6.10.3.4).

## **Grant Opportunities**

Currently, various departments are working with Wellington Dupont on securing funding for the following projects:

1. Green and Inclusive Community Build (GICB) – a detailed reporting of the Town’s rejection from the GICB grant was provided in the February 12, 2024 and March 25, 2024 delegation update reports. Wellington Dupont has this funding source as their top priority and in addition to establishing favourable meetings for the Town with senior Infrastructure Canada staff, has positioned the Town well to resubmit to this fund with the recent Federal Budget announcement of the fund being replenished. Estimated grant \$13 million.
2. Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) – Similarly, while the Town was rejected from this fund in 2023, the Federal Government has recently announced a topping up of the HAF and Wellington Dupont has secured meetings with senior Infrastructure Canada staff as well as the Prime Minister’s Office in order to position the Town well to resubmit to this fund. Estimated grant is approximately \$3 million.
3. Housing Enabling Water Systems Fund (HEWSF) – On April 19, 2024, Grantmatch submitted an application for funding on the Town’s behalf, for the Southampton Water Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade, which is planned to be tendered and awarded later in 2024. Estimated grant \$18 Million.
4. Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund – Application in and Wellington Dupont helping to clarify eligibility with Minister Thompson’s Office to partially fund solar panels on the AWC. Estimated grant \$250,000.
5. Inclusive Community Grant – Chantry Senior Centre Accessibility Improvements. Estimated Grant \$54,350.
6. Experience Ontario Program – Partnership with the Southampton Business Improvement Area for the Live at the Lake Event. Estimated Grant \$33,500.
7. Inclusive Community Seniors and Accessibility Grant – Chantry Seniors Centre Accessibility Improvements. Estimated Grant \$60,000

**Estimated total funding opportunity \$34,397,850.**

### **Advocacy Supports**

1. Pioneer Cemetery – As recently as May 8<sup>th</sup>, Mayor and staff met with the Premier’s office where there was strong indication that they may be able to provide \$350,000 support to offset \$800,000 required.
2. Chantry Island Lease / Maintenance – Facilitating discussions with the Regional Advisor to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to advance the review of structural assessments, develop maintenance plan and pursuing the request for long term lease Agreement between DFO, Town and Marine Heritage Society to continue the Chantry Island tours.
3. Marine Rescue – A request has been made to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to support the Fire Department in Marine Rescue. Estimated funding opportunity \$40,000 to offset Fire Department costs.

4. MTO Rail Trail Crossing / Connecting Links Funding – Facilitating discussions with the Ministry of Transportation pursuing installation of a safe crossing infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
5. Fiber Optics – A meeting has occurred to request the Ministry to provide information on accessing fiber optics throughout the whole Town.
6. Further supports during the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) annual conferences.

#### Upcoming Opportunities

1. GICB as noted above
2. MAF as noted above
3. Building Faster Fund
4. Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund – announced as part of the 2024 Provincial budget for upgrading and new sport and recreation facilities. Opens this summer. Estimated funding opportunity \$10 million.
5. The Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Capital Grant – a potential funding stream for the AWC.
6. The Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund – a funding stream for any potential events/attractions in the Town.

#### Financing Summary

As per the Town’s Purchasing Policy 6.10.3.4 Additional Deliveries, Council has the authority to extend this contract. It is requested that Council extend the contract for Wellington Dupont until December 31, 2024 in order to see the conclusion of a number of funding opportunities totalling over **\$34,397,850**.

The funding of the contract will be through the Future Capital Reserve and will be offset by successful grants. The long-term borrowing for the AWC and the Water / Wastewater Reserve will also be positively impacted by successful grants providing Council with the opportunity to further leverage the Legacy Reserve for other initiatives and advance further capital upgrades to the water and wastewater systems to support long term growth. Staff recommend that Council consider in the 2025 Business Plan the addition of future government relations funding to support ongoing advocacy and grant support for the Town. Through this experience, it has been observed that this is a long-term strategy that requires continued commitment to realize the dividends.

#### **Linkages**

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Strategic Pillar 3: Building Valued Relationships
- Business Plan Alignment: CAO Major Initiative

#### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding**

Cost of \$50,000 to be allocated from the Future Capital Reserve with an improvement in the accumulated surplus anticipated as a result of successful grant applications.

---

Reviewed By: Jim Bundschuh, Director, Corporate Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer