

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006**

**CIRCULATED REPORTS  
FOR AGENDA**

**PAGES**

***CORPORATE SERVICES***

**ADMINISTRATION**

- 2-8 Grants-in-Aid Policy.
- 9-16 Vancouver Island Biosphere Request for Study Funding.

**COMMISSION, ADVISORY & SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Grants-in-Aid Advisory Committee.**

- 17 Minutes of the Grants-in-Aid Advisory Committee meeting held February 6, 2006. (for information)



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO			
CHAIR		GM Cms	
CAO		GM ES	
DA CCD		MoF	
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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** C.Mason  
Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** February 8, 2006

**FROM:** N.Avery  
Manager, Financial Services

**FILE:**

**SUBJECT:** Grants in Aid Policy

**PURPOSE:**

To present the formal policy for administering general grants-in-aid.

**BACKGROUND:**

At its December 2005 meeting the Board considered a staff report regarding a funding request from the Vancouver Island Biosphere Center. The Board approved a staff recommendation to defer responding to the request until a review of the current grant in aid policy had been conducted. Staff met with the new members of the Grant in Aid committee and discussed some options with respect to the program, which have been outlined in the minutes included in this committee agenda. This report reviews those options in light of the committee's feedback.

The Regional District may as part of its general corporate powers provide assistance to benefit the community (Section 176(1) (c) of the *Community Charter*). The maximum amount of assistance that may be provided is .10 cents per \$1,000 of taxable assessments in the regional district (Section 815(9) of the *Local Government Act*). This limit would raise \$1.7 million dollars using 2006 assessment values.

The *Local Government Act* provides a flexible approach to raising funds for grants in aid. It is permissible to identify any individual or group of members as participants in a particular amount of community grant funding. Presently \$42,500 is raised for general community grants-in-aid and the amount is raised on the basis of assessments with all members of the Regional District participating. The result is an allocation as follows:

Member	Amount
Nanaimo	\$ 21,303 (returned directly to the City for direct distribution)
Lantzville	1,179 (returned directly to the District for direct distribution)
Electoral Area A	1,598
Electoral Area B	1,881
Electoral Area C	1,559
<b>Total for Jurisdiction D68</b>	<b>\$ 27,520 (.20 per \$100,000)</b>
Parksville	\$ 3,661
Qualicum Beach	3,201
Electoral Area E	2,734
Electoral Area F	1,696
Electoral Area G	2,219
Electoral Area H	1,469
<b>Total for Jurisdiction D69</b>	<b>\$ 14,980 (.20 per \$100,000)</b>
<b>Total raised</b>	<b>\$ 42,500</b>

Grant applications are adjudicated by an advisory committee consisting of a Board member and three public appointees – preferably at least one appointee from each of jurisdiction D68 and D69. Grants are intended to support activities providing social enrichment to the community and filling an identified need which is not otherwise addressed by existing organizations or programs. Organizations are generally expected to be financially independent and so grants are not intended to be used for operational support such as wages and regular facility operating costs. More specifically grants are targeted towards start up or new program costs such as initial capital purchases, supplies and on occasion facility rent.

#### Vancouver Island Biosphere Funding Request

Late last year the Regional Board was approached by the steering committee for the Vancouver Island Biosphere Center requesting financial support in the amount of \$25,000 to hire a part time staff person to assist in developing a business plan and in donor identification so that the project becomes a private/public partnership. Staff reported that this particular request was financially unsupportable within the existing grant program. There is also some question whether the proposal fits the accepted criteria for a grant-in-aid because wages are not a supported criteria. Additionally the purpose of the proposal is to support and increase economic development and tourism – activities which are addressed in a number of other ways throughout the region. Staff recommended a review of the grant in aid program before considering this request further to establish whether there is a need or desire to change the program in any way.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

##### Alternative 1

Amend the Grant-in-aid Policy establishing a maximum grant amount of \$5,000 and identifying a process for grant requests exceeding \$5,000.

##### Alternative 2

Amend the Grant-in-aid policy as described in Alternative 1 and explicitly acknowledge that wages are considered an allowable start up cost.

##### Alternative 3

Make no changes to the current policy.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Alternative 1 –The only financial change proposed is to specify a maximum grant amount of \$5,000 under the general grant-in-aid program. Grant requests at or above this level are fairly infrequent and can only be addressed now if there are few other competing demands.

Appendix 1 attached to this report summarizes the number of grant requests greater than and less than \$5,000 over the period 2001 to 2005, the total value of grant requests and the value of grants approved, which is relative to the amounts raised for D68 and D69 noted in the table above. One grant was approved in that time period in the amount of \$4,000(D69) – all other grant approvals were less than \$3,000 and most were less than \$2,000.

Initially staff proposed that grant requests exceeding \$5,000 be directed immediately to the Board for further direction. The members of the grant-in-aid committee indicated that very often only specific items within larger requests will qualify and be approved for grant support and the members did not express any concern about evaluating larger grant requests. Finally, if larger grant requests do not reach the committee, the committee will lose some perspective on the level of community demand.

The committee discussed other approaches where larger grant requests may be denied or only partially supported. One alternative is to notify those proponents that they approach the Board directly if they wish to pursue further funding. Given the number of grant requests exceeding \$5,000 shown in Appendix 1, this may be a practical solution. It supports both the rationale for having a committee review in the first place but allows more unusual requests an opportunity to present their case directly to the Board. The policy would be amended as described below.

Where a proponent has been reviewed by the advisory committee they may approach the Board directly with their request. Where staff are directed by the Board the application would be evaluated firstly against this policy and secondly relative to the overall objectives of the programs and services provided by the Regional District. Staff will report on whether the request:

- meets or does not meet the general grant in aid criteria
- should be addressed within the budget plan for an existing service
- should be addressed through a separate one time grant in aid
- should not be supported because it is beyond the scope and intent of the grants-in-aid

#### Alternative 2

This alternative would amend the policy further to permit wages as part of program start up costs eligible for support. This would make the qualification criteria slightly more flexible but still require any grant to be primarily a one time cost. Any evaluation would distinguish "volunteer honorariums" for example, from ongoing staff wages and very critically examine whether "staff" costs were essential to the program proposal. The committee did not support this change. They indicated that it was usually possible to identify elements of the grant request that are more appropriate costs for grant funding than staff wages.

#### Alternative 3

Making no changes to the current policy approach does not appear to have any significant financial implications. The criteria are broad enough to allow consideration of any reasonable cost deemed appropriate for grant support. There does not appear to be a specific need for a maximum dollar limit, although staff believe this is appropriate in any case.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:**

The alternatives presented above contemplate a grant in aid approval structure not dissimilar to the current structure. Grants would be centrally administered on behalf of Electoral Areas A, B, C, E, F, G, and H and the municipalities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

Under either alternative, staff recommend establishing a maximum grant-in-aid limit of \$5,000.


A second alteration recommended by staff concerns grant applications in excess of \$5,000. Staff recommend that grant applications exceeding \$5,000 be reviewed by the grant-in-aid advisory committee first and then additionally be advised that they are welcome to approach the Board directly if they wish to pursue further consideration. The Board will determine whether they wish staff to provide a further

recommendation. Grant applications in excess of \$5,000 would be evaluated firstly against the existing criteria and secondly for relevance with Regional District programs and services.

A third alternation to consider is to include wages which are part of the start up costs of a new program as an eligible grant cost. Any evaluation would distinguish "volunteer honorariums" for example from ongoing staff wages and very critically examine whether "staff" costs were essential to the program proposal. The members of the grant in aid committee did not support this change and indicated that it was usually possible to identify non-wage related costs which could be supported for grant purposes. Staff defer to the committee's advice.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That a maximum limit of \$5,000 be established for a grant in aid under this program.
2. That the process for grant requests exceeding \$5,000 as outlined in this report be added to the policy.
3. That Grant-in-Aid Policy A1.28 be approved as presented.

  
Report Writer

  
C.A.O. Concurrence

**COMMENTS:**

## REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

### POLICY

SUBJECT:	<i>Grants-in-Aid</i>	POLICY NO:	A1.28
		CROSS REF.:	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	February 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	APPROVED BY:	Board
REVISION DATE:		PAGE	1 of 5

#### PURPOSE

To establish criteria for the Regional Board and the Grants-in-Aid Advisory Committee to evaluate grant-in-aid requests.

#### POLICY

The Regional District of Nanaimo provides Grant-in-Aid funding in order to assist non-profit societies to provide social programs and services that serve a local community or provide a regional benefit. The society must provide a social enrichment service, demonstrate that the service fills a need in the community and show that the activity does not overlap with existing services or service providers.

It is the desire of the Regional District that organizations strive for financial independence, therefore financial need must be demonstrated annually and an application must be submitted in the form approved from time to time.

The Committee may recommend to the Board after its final meeting of the year, whether there should be a change in the amount of grant in aid program funding for the subsequent year. The Board will, as part of its annual budget development, establish an amount for Grants-in-Aid.

A Grants-in-Aid Advisory Committee will be established to review applications and make recommendations to the Board. The committee where possible will consist of one member from each of the following categories:

- o Board member
- o Public appointee D68
- o Public appointee D 69
- o Public appointee Member at Large

#### PROCEDURES

1. The Advisory Committee will advertise an opportunity to apply for grant-in-aids twice a year in April and September and shall make recommendations to the Regional Board based on applications received.
2. Late applications will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.
3. Applications will not be accepted from organizations located primarily within the City of Nanaimo and the District of Lantzville.
4. Preference will be given to registered non-profit societies.
5. Grants-in-aid are supported for the following general uses:

- requests showing a significant benefit to the Regional District or specific area within the Regional District including but not limited to:
    - i. promoting volunteer participation and citizen involvement;
    - ii. the use of new approaches and techniques in the solution of community needs;
    - iii. activities/programs that are accessible to a large portion of the community's residents such as special events
  - start up costs for new organizations or new programs
  - volunteer training
  - capital costs for equipment or improvements to organization owned facilities
6. Grants-in-aid are not available for:
- Annual operating expenses
  - Wages, salaries or other fees for service (remuneration)
  - Capital improvements to rented or leased premises
7. No single grant in aid shall exceed \$5,000 ( five thousand dollars)
8. The attached application form must be used and be accompanied by the documentation listed below:
- latest financial statement
  - budget summary
  - project budget
  - annual report (if available)
9. Applicants will be notified in writing as to whether or not their request has been successful and, if successful, the amount they will receive.
10. Successful recipients must notify the Regional Board in writing, once the grant monies have been spent providing brief details on how the money was used. Future applications from recipients not fulfilling this requirement will be rejected.

#### **GRANT APPLICATIONS EXCEEDING \$5,000**

1. In cases where an application exceeds \$5,000 and subsequent to the committee's review, the proponent shall be advised that they may approach the Regional Board directly if they wish to pursue their funding request.
2. The Board will provide direction to staff on whether to respond further.
3. Grant requests exceeding \$5,000 will be considered firstly within the criteria under this policy and secondly relative to the overall objectives of the programs and services provided by the Regional District.
4. Staff will report on whether the request:
  - i. Meets or does not meet the criteria in this policy
  - ii. Should be addressed within the budget plan for an existing service
  - iii. Should be addressed through a separate one time grant-in-aid
  - iv. Should not be supported because it is beyond the scope and intent of a grant-in-aid

**APPENDIX 1**

**SUMMARY OF GRANTS IN AID 2001 TO 2005**

	D 68	D 69	D 68	D 69	D 68	D 69	D 68	D 69	D 68	D 69
	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
\$5,000 or more	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	3	0	3
Less than \$5,000	10	21	2	21	7	19	7	12	8	13
Total grant requests	\$21,726	\$45,248	\$8,129	\$32,025	\$27,448	\$35,345	\$14,184	\$40,895	\$10,823	\$38,663
Grants approved	\$6,249	\$13,875	\$4,129	\$10,805	\$8,636	\$14,150	\$6,408	\$16,347	\$5,559	\$10,585





REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO			
CHAIR		GM Cms	
CAO		GM ES	
DA/CCD		Mgr	
FEB 10 2006			
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MEMORANDUM

TO: C. Mason  
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 4, 2006

FROM: N. Avery  
Manager, Financial Services

FILE:

SUBJECT: Vancouver Island Biosphere Request for Study Funding

PURPOSE:

To recommend a course of action with respect to the request for funding a business plan from the Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2005 the Board considered a staff report which outlined the Regional District's powers and current approach to providing grants in aid for special community initiatives. A copy of that report is attached for reference.

Staff have recently clarified some details of the request. The total budget for this phase of the project is \$75,000, consisting of about \$25,000 for a business plan and \$50,000 for a staff position. The group was encouraged by federal and provincial program representatives to include the staff component at this time, to increase the profile of the initiative with potential funding partners. The idea is that once the business plan is complete, the report would be shared with those potential partners to help them consider their continuing financial interest.

For the purposes of completing the review of this request, staff have provided below an evaluation of the grant in aid criteria relative to this application as well as other summary comments.

Beginning with the grant in aid criteria the following summary is provided:

1. Does the application fall within the spirit and purpose of a general grant in aid which is outlined as:

*"The Regional District of Nanaimo provides Grants-in-Aid funding in order to assist non-profit societies to provide social programs and services that serve a local community or provide a regional benefit. The society must provide a social enrichment service, demonstrate that the service fills a need in the community and show that the activity does not overlap with existing services or service providers."*

Response:

- a) The biosphere is intended to enhance the economic potential of the region and may also enrich the community through educational opportunities promoting the environmental qualities of our region.
- b) There is a difference between economic development and social enrichment and staff would suggest that the intent of grants in aid leans more heavily on the latter than on the former. This application only partly meets the intent of our grant in aid policy.

- c) To date no consensus has been reached on the Regional District's role in economic development initiatives.
2. Does the application seek limited financial support as outlined in the statement "*It is the desire of the Regional District that organizations strive for financial independence, therefore financial need must be demonstrated annually and an application must be submitted in the form approved from time to time.*"

***Response:***

The application is for significant financial support. There is no organizational history to draw on as to whether the centre will be self supporting.

3. Does the application address one or more of the following:
- *shows a significant benefit to the Regional District or specific area within the Regional District including but not limited to:*
    - i. *promoting volunteer participation and citizen involvement;*
    - ii. *the use of new approaches and techniques in the solution of community needs;*
    - iii. *activities/programs that are accessible to a large portion of the community's residents such as special events*
  - *is for start up costs for new organizations or new programs*
  - *is for volunteer training*
  - *is for capital costs for equipment or improvements to organization owned facilities*

***Response:***

The application does not result in any immediate community benefit. If the centre is ultimately successful it should result in activities or programs accessible to a large portion of the community's residents. The hiring of a staff person to advance the concept of the biosphere centre and to solicit further financial support is not deemed to be a qualifying start up cost for a typical grant in aid, however, the amount of \$25,000 for a consultant to prepare a business plan could be considered a start up cost.

4. Should the application be addressed within the budget plan for an existing service?

***Response:***

Given the close connection with environmental values, consideration could be given to funding this through our Regional Parks service. This approach would be similar to the operating grant provided to the Nanaimo Area Land Trust to support their land acquisition/protection activities.

5. Should the application be addressed through a separate one time grant-in-aid?

***Response:***

This is a practical response to what appears to be an innovative idea. There is no specific policy direction to guide the Board except to refer back to the general intent of our policy which is to provide limited support to initiatives providing a social enrichment service that do not overlap with existing services or service providers.

On balance this application is a considerable departure both in terms of spirit and amount of financial support. Staff complete this discussion by outlining the financial implications below.

#### ALTERNATIVES:

1. Raise a one time grant in the amount of \$25,000 in 2006 from among District 69 members for the purpose of assisting the Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre to prepare a business plan. The grant would be contingent upon the balance of funding being confirmed prior to the commencement of the proposed activities and would be payable in stages as the business plan is completed. The Regional District would receive a copy of the plan upon completion.
2. Raise a one time grant in the amount of \$8,350 representing one third of the budgeted cost for the business plan as assistance to the Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre under the terms and conditions outlined under Alternative 1.
3. Provide indirect financial support to the Biosphere Centre by providing land as a site for the interpretive centre.
4. Increase the requisition for Regional Parks operations in 2006 to provide a one time grant to the Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre with terms and conditions as outlined in Alternative 1.
5. Decline to provide financial support as the initiative does not fit within the Regional District's current services and programs.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

*Alternative 1* –Coincidentally, the budget for the business plan is \$25,000. The grant in aid would be associated with the business plan as a product and allow the biosphere center to secure the funds for the balance of its budget from the federal/provincial agencies. The cost to raise \$25,000 in District 69 is estimated at \$.40 cents per \$100,000 of assessment. Under this alternative the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach would be assessed approximately \$11,450 (\$6,110 and \$5,340 respectively) or 45% of the total amount.

*Alternative 2* - The Board may choose to offer support for the business plan at one third of \$25,000 in the amount of \$8,350. As described above, the federal/provincial agencies are encouraging a more ambitious approach probably in part to reduce the number of times the group returns for funding of the next steps. Staff cannot provide any information as to whether the applicant would secure the remaining one third under this approach.

*Alternative 3*- The Board may choose to offer indirect support in the form of land within our inventory of Regional Parks. The financial value to the centre with this approach would be considerable. Staff have already met with the proponents without any immediate success, however, it would be appropriate to encourage the proponents to maintain open lines of communication on this specific aspect.

*Alternative 4*–Raising \$25,000 under the operations formula for Regional Parks would result in the highest requisition coming from the City of Nanaimo. The City of Nanaimo would contribute \$14,360 (57.4%) of the total amount. (The Regional Parks operations formula is based partly on population). As this initiative would primarily benefit District 69, staff do not recommend this option.

*Alternative 5* – It is likely to be more difficult for the initiative to proceed further as the matching funding from the federal/provincial agencies is contingent on securing local government support.

**SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS:**

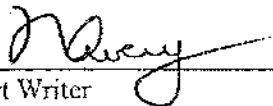
The Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre is requesting support in the amount of \$25,000, as one third funding to develop a business plan. Previous staff reports have outlined both the shortcomings and financial constraints of the existing grant in aid program. A brief review of the program has been undertaken and no changes to either the criteria or funding levels have been recommended for 2006.

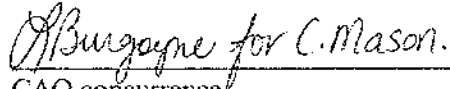
There is no simple answer to supporting this request. It is an innovative idea which may provide some long term enrichment to the community, however, it is not a typical grant in aid request and far exceeds the modest financial support available within the current program. In terms of the financial aspect only, staff would be reluctant to recommend a full grant because of the future consequences for the grant in aid program. However, we respect that the organization has been diligent in exploring alternative funding sources and may be unable to proceed further without local support.

The centre appears to have some support within District 69 and should the Board approve a grant either for the full amount of \$25,000, or some lesser amount based on costs directly associated with producing a business plan, the funds could be raised under the Regional District's general corporate powers. The members from District 69 would cost share on the basis of property values. Alternatively the Board could confirm its earlier direction of indirect support by offering staff assistance to identify potential land locations within our inventory of Regional Parks.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board approve raising from District 69 members, a one time grant-in-aid in the amount of \$8,350 for the preparation of a business plan for the Vancouver Island Biosphere Center with terms and conditions as outlined in Alternative 1.

  
Report Writer

  
CAO concurrence

**COMMENTS:**



3. Direct the Vancouver Island Biosphere Center to make an application to the Grants-In-Aid committee.
4. Defer a decision on this request and direct staff to review comparative jurisdictions' grants-in-aid criteria, obtain comment and input from the current members of the Grants-In-Aid committee and report the results to the Board prior to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

*Alternative 1* - The cost of raising \$25,000 in District 69 is estimated at \$.40 cents per \$100,000 of assessment. Under this alternative the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach would be assessed approximately \$11,450 (\$6,110 and \$5,340 respectively). This decision would be supporting a funding request outside of the current grant criteria.

*Alternative 2* - The cost of raising \$25,000 among all members of the Regional District is estimated at \$.10 cents per \$100,000 of assessment. Under this alternative the City of Nanaimo's assessment would be about \$12,150, with Parksville and Qualicum Beach being assessed \$4,035 (\$2,150 and \$1,885 respectively). This decision would be supporting a funding request outside of the current grant criteria.

*Alternative 3* - The Grants-in-Aid committee reviews applications twice a year, the first in-take of applications being solicited in April. A decision by the committee would be made later than the adoption of an amended financial plan by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Furthermore, this request raises the question of whether it should be funded regionally or solely by District 69. The Grants-In-Aid committee manages specific allocated amounts for District 68 and District 69 and may need alternative direction from the Board for this specific application.

*Alternative 4* - This alternative will assist the Board to determine whether changes to the qualifying criteria should be made and whether there is support and justification for a general increase in the amount of grant-in-aid funding.

#### **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS:**

The Vancouver Island Biosphere Center is requesting support in the amount of \$25,000, as one third funding to develop a business plan. Staff have outlined above the shortcomings of the Regional District model with respect to such one-off funding requests. Our constraints are threefold - firstly, there is no specific service budget which matches the purpose of this request (promotion of eco-tourism and economic development). Secondly, the request does not likely meet the criteria for a general grant-in-aid and thirdly, the general grant-in-aid funds are insufficient to provide this grant without seriously affecting monies available to other worthy applicants. The Board does have the authority to raise additional grant-in-aid funds to provide the requested support, however, this would place the grant clearly outside of the current management process for grants-in-aid.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That a decision on the request from the Vancouver Island Biosphere Center be deferred and that staff be directed to review comparative jurisdictions' grants-in-aid criteria, obtain comment and input from the current members of the Grants-In-Aid committee and report the results of the survey to the Board prior to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

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Report Writer

#### **COMMENTS:**

**Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre  
"Turning the Dream Into Reality"**

October 24, 2005

Mr. Joe Stanhope  
Chairperson  
Regional District of Nanaimo  
6300 Hammond Bay Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6N2

Dear Mr. Stanhope,

On June 27, 2005 the VIBC Steering Committee met with Teunis Westbroek, Randy Longmuir, Kelly Daniels and you to discuss this exciting project and regional commitment to it. At the conclusion of the meeting, there was an expressed commitment by all parties to work together to identify an appropriate site for the Centre, co-fund the development of a business plan and find a way to capitalize the project on an ongoing basis. As a volunteer committee, we were very encouraged and energized by your response.

We're very pleased to report that the VIBC Steering Committee has recently met with Neil Connelly, Tom Osborne and Joan Michel of the RDN to review potential sites for the project. While inconclusive, it narrowed the focus of the site search enabling the committee to conduct the further research necessary to find a home for the Centre in the region. That work is ongoing.

We're also delighted to report that we have recently added two new members to the Steering Committee. Dr. Nicole Vaugeois, Department of Recreation and Tourism, Malaspina University-College and Caroline Grover, Economic Development Officer of the City of Parksville. Both have volunteered their considerable talents to help make this project a regional success.

As discussed at the June meeting, the Steering Committee now needs to move forward to Phase III of the project, which is the development of a business plan. Both Phases I and II research projects

recommended such a step as essential to the overall success of the project. Through consultation with the federal and provincial economic development and tourism agencies, we have established a \$75,000 budget for this step in the process. Included in this funding is a part-time project coordinator position that would, among other things, allow the Steering Committee to identify and contact potential major donors to the project so that it becomes a private and public sector partnership.

The funding source identified for the business plan is Western Economic Diversification's (WD) Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA). This fund requires a one-third cost-sharing agreement among local, provincial and federal sources. The RDN, the Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville would need to combine resources to allocate \$25,000 to leverage the remaining \$50,000 from the provincial and federal governments. Provincial and federal government representatives have advised us that there is a high likelihood that their contributions would be forthcoming if the region makes this commitment.

The development of a business plan is an essential next step in the evolution of this tourism and economic development project. Once a business plan exists and a site is found, the project can begin to attract major donors and leverage additional government funds to make it a reality. We need your support to take this next step.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Greg Spears  
Chair, Steering Committee  
Vancouver Island Biosphere Centre  
1585 Seacrest Road, Nanoose Bay, BC V9P 9B5  
Telephone: (250) 468-1663



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO**

**MINUTES OF THE GRANT IN AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2006 AT 1:30 PM IN THE  
RDN COMMITTEE ROOM**

**Present:**

Director M. Young	Chairperson
Elaine Hamilton	District 68
Frank Van Eynde	District 69
Aileen Fabris	District 69

**Also in Attendance:**

C. Mason	Chief Administrative Officer
N. Avery	Manager of Financial Services
M. Pearse	Manager Administrative Services
L. Burgoyne	Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting commenced at approximately 1:40 p.m.

**MINUTES**

Ms. Avery provided background comments on the report under consideration – Grants in Aid Policy review.

Each member of the committee provided comments on three primary aspects of the administration of the grant-in-aid program:

1. Should a limit be established for applications which would be reviewed by the Committee versus being directed to staff for a specific separate Board report?

Concern was expressed that without an initial committee review members would lose perspective on the size and nature of applications for financial support. The consensus of the Committee was that no difficulties have been encountered in evaluating larger requests and no change is recommended to the process of having all grant requests reviewed by the Committee.

2. Should wages be considered an eligible grant cost?

There was consensus that generally speaking wages are not an eligible cost and that most applications have other elements which fit the grant criteria and for which grants have been allowed.

3. Should funding be raised separately for District 68 than for District 69?

There was consensus that this could be reviewed at a later date in 2006 when the committee has met formally to begin reviewing applications. No changes are recommended for 2006.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting concluded at approximately 2:30 pm.

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CHAIRPERSON