



The Corporation of the Municipality of Wawa
Staff Report

Office of the Director of Community Services and Tourism

Prepared For: Committee of the Whole	Report No.: AP 2024-11
Agenda Date: May 21, 2024	File No.: C11

Subject

This report concerns a recent request to waive the fees for a boat slip at the Harry McCluskie Municipal Marina (Marina).

Summary of the Recommendation


THAT the Council of the Municipality of Wawa denies the fee waiver request as there is no policy, precedent, or mandate to approve it.

Summary of the Issues

The Municipality has received a request from the Lady Dunn Health Centre (LDHC) for a fee waiver of a boat slip for a local physician as part of the physician recruitment process. Unfortunately, Municipal Policy only covers the waiver of rooms at the Michipicoten Memorial Community Centre and there is no other policy or precedent for a similar waiver of fees.

List of Stakeholders

- Municipal Council
- Ratepayers
- Facility users of the Marina
- Municipal Staff

Respectfully Submitted By: 	Prepared By: Alex Patterson, Director, Community Services and Tourism
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Purpose of Report

This report originates from a request discussed by a Marina Committee member and the Physician Recruitment coordinator of the Lady Dunn Health Center (LDHC). This request was originally brought to staff who, without a policy mechanism to waive such a fee request, referred the member to the LDHC coordinator for review. The coordinator then sent the request to Council, which prompted this report to be written.

Analysis

Fee Waiver – Policy / Precedent

When staff originally reviewed this request with the committee member, there is no current or past Municipal policy governing the waiver of fees for any facility other than the Michipicoten Memorial Community Centre (MMCC). Therefore, this request was denied on that grounds. There have also been no other fee waivers at the Marina facility in the past and similar to other items on the schedule of fees are implemented for any user of the facility.

LDHC Partnership – Physician Recruitment

Staff referred the committee member to the LDHC coordinator for physician recruitment based on the partnership between the Municipality and the LDHC. The Municipality has provided the LDHC with funding over the past few years to encourage recruitment, and retention, of local medical professionals. In doing so, staff have often worked with the LDHC to provide gym memberships, merchandise from the Tourist Information Centre, and other programs and services to continue this partnership. Often staff will invoice the LDHC for the program or products, and this has in the past been a seamless and beneficial partnership that we look forward to continuing. Staff expected that this request would be approved by using already provided Municipal funds to provide the slip rental as has been done with other previous initiatives as part of the partnership.

Fee Waiver Request

Upon receiving the fee waiver request back from the LDHC, staff completed a short analysis on previous requests. Through the MMCC, staff have only recommended approving requests on behalf of service groups offering programming to the community at large and not for individuals. Based on the nature of the request as well as the lack of past precedence for the decision, staff cannot recommend its approval in keeping with both policy as well as fairness to all users. It is important to note that we do recognize and appreciate all that our local physicians have done

for the community, and agree wholeheartedly with the contents of the letter – these individuals are greatly appreciated by the Municipality for their efforts in Wawa.

Financial/Staffing Implications

Proposed Cost

The cost of such a request for Council to consider is \$520.00 for a seasonal slip for a 20' boat.

Policies Affecting Proposal

None – No fee waiver policy exists for this facility

Comments from Relevant Departments/Community and Corporate Partners

None

Alternatives

Option 1: Waive Fees

This option would see the Municipality waive the fees as requested. Based on a lack of policy and past precedence, this option is **Not Recommended**

Option 2: Do not Waive Fees

This option would see the Municipality not waive the fees for the facility. As this is in keeping with current policy, this option is **Recommended**.

Conclusion

By accepting the recommendation, the Municipality is ensuring that we follow our own policies and apply fees fairly to all users.

Recommendation

THAT the Council of the Municipality of Wawa denies the fee waiver request as there is no policy, precedent, or mandate to approve it.

Attachments

Request - LDHC
End of Report.

Suzanne Lord

Subject: FW: Dr. Cotterill Dr. Oberai Physician Retention

On May 7, 2024, at 6:22 PM, Fenlon, Ann <afenlon@ldhc.com> wrote:

Good afternoon, Mitch.

I was recently contacted by Perry Kauk, regarding his idea to show appreciation to our long term physicians, Dr. Cotterill and Dr. Oberai. Perry's suggestion is for the Municipality of Wawa to waive the marina slip seasonal rental fee for Dr. Oberai and Cotterill's boat.

Dr. Oberai and Cotterill have been local physicians dedicated to our community for well over 25 years. They have supported our local medical system, offering primary care through clinic appointments, as well as providing hospital and emergency department coverage. They have seen both the good times and the bad, not only through the boom and bust cycle of the Wawa economy, but also through the coming and going of local physicians. They have remained steadfast through the pandemic, and now, through our Ontario and Canada wide physician shortage crisis.

Having first visited Wawa as locum physicians in 1996, the physician couple embraced the community and chose to move here as permanent doctors in 1998. They have since called Wawa home, and have passed through many cycles of life from newlyweds, raising a family, and now as empty-nesters, all the time working as physicians in our community. While their next phase of life may include working less and planning retirement, these two doctors continue to show their commitment through their tireless efforts to promote and grow the Wawa Medical Group.

In addition to providing medical care, these physicians also do much behind the scenes. Dr. Oberai, as our physician lead for recruitment, puts in countless hours vetting and scheduling locum physicians, and managing the complicated locum funding system used by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Dr. Oberai also participates in numerous initiatives to affect positive change at the provincial level for Northern Ontario communities, and is a NOSM Family Medicine Co-Chair, putting Wawa on the map and directly in front of the newest group of family doctors. Both Dr. Oberai and Cotterill act as mentors not only for our locum physicians, many of whom are new grads, but also for medical students and residents who choose Wawa for their elective placements. They, as well as our locums, choose Wawa because of the solid reputation built by Dr. Oberai and Cotterill as a practice site for full-scope rural family medicine generalists. I would be remiss if I did not also mention that our core group physicians are also our pinch-hitters. They will fill in when there is a disruption in locum physician coverage in our emergency department, when extra hands are needed or simply when our locum wants a local physician back-up if they are feeling out of their comfort zone. This is 'above and beyond' and does not always happen in other communities, sometimes resulting in emergency room closures.

While many other physicians have come and gone, due to the stresses of work or family life, the pandemic, or the physician shortage crisis, we have been fortunate that Dr. Cotterill and Dr. Oberai have chosen to continue to stay in Wawa, and to continue to work. While we are dependent on a locum physician supply to keep our hospital open, this supply is highly dependent on a secure, stable and supportive core physician group. While our community currently has 3 full time physicians while allocated a complement of 7, this number had dwindled down to two from September through December of 2023, and yet this physician couple held fast and tight, and saw us through.

While numerous initiatives have been taken at the government level to ease the physician shortage crisis, none of them will yield short-term results. Initiatives such as pan-Canadian licensure, easing licensing requirements for physicians from UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, and the Practice Ready Ontario

initiative which will assist in other International Medical Grads being able to gain licensure, these are not going to provide the over 2500 family doctors that are needed in Ontario today. The plan to increase medical student seats and open new medical schools in Ontario will offer some relief after 6 years or more, once these students graduate. For these reasons physician retention is as important as physician recruitment. As gratitude is an antidote for burnout, a display of gratitude for these long-standing physicians will ensure they know that their commitment to Wawa is seen and understood for the gift that it continues to be to our community.

With this in mind, I support Perry Kauk's idea, for the municipality to show appreciation to Dr. Cotterill and Dr. Oberaj, for their longstanding and steadfast commitment to Wawa. Waiving the marina slip seasonal rental fee would be a token of that appreciation.

I told Perry that I would send this request to you, as our municipal council representative on the North Algoma Medical Recruitment and Retention Collaborative, and that you would know best how to proceed. Please feel free to forward this email as necessary, or please advise if there is another channel through which I should send this request.

Thanks

Ann Fenlon

North Algoma Medical Recruitment and Retention Coordinator
NAMRRC, Lady Dunn Health Centre, Wawa ON
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Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that we serve communities in the Robinson-Superior and James Bay Treaty territories and that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg/Ojibwe, Ojibwe-cree, Cree and Métis people, specifically the Michipicoten and Missanabie Cree First Nations. We recognize the trails forged long before our time and the opportunities provided by the first peoples of this great land. We are grateful for the opportunity to work together to continue to build an equitable health system based upon respect and reconciliation.