

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Memorial Donation  
**Prepared By:** Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Department:** Administration  
**Date:** June 10, 2025  
**Report Number:** CAO2025-07                      **File Number:** C11AD

### Attachments:

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CAO2025-07 – Memorial Donation, prepared by Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer and in so doing authorizes Option \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

### Report:

#### Background:

At the May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Council Meeting direction was provided to staff to report back on options that may be appropriate for the Municipality to make a contribution to, in memory of the four students (Rowan McLeod, Olivia Rourke, Kaydance Ford and Danica Baker) and teacher (Mathew Eckert) involved in the devastating accident that occurred on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 that has had profound and devastating mark on the community, families and friends affected.

#### Analysis:

Since learning of this heartbreaking tragedy, the Municipality has taken active steps to support the Walkerton District Community School and the affected families. We have provided additional staff resources, enhanced security, waived rental fees and provided logistical support for the funerals taking place in our community. While no action can fully ease the pain of such a profound loss, we remain committed to offering support wherever possible.

Although the Municipality typically adheres to its existing Donation Policy and does not regularly contribute to individual memorial initiatives, the exceptional nature of this tragedy warrants thoughtful consideration. It is important that we honour the memory of those lost in a way that reflects both the wishes of the families and the spirit of community support that has emerged.

Two GoFundMe campaigns have been established in response to this tragedy. The first, *“The Walkerton District Community School Tragedy,”* raised \$213,438 to assist with unexpected funeral expenses and has since closed for disbursement of those funds. The second, the *“Riverhawks Memorial Scholarship,”* aims to create five academic and athletic scholarships for students at Walkerton District Community School and has raised \$10,155 to date. The residents, families, friends and business community have stepped up to make personal donations to support the families during this time.

Upon reviewing the memorial preferences expressed by the families, three of the five have requested donations be directed toward school-related programs or trusts. In alignment with these wishes, ongoing community efforts, and the Municipality’s Donation Policy the following Options may be a consideration for Council.

Option 1- Council considers a contribution in support of individual memorial trusts established through the Bluewater District School Board for the Walkerton District Community School.

Option 2- In discussion with the Walkerton District Community School Principal there are initial discussions for a memorial garden on the school site. This would be an area to honor the five lost and create a lasting legacy. While plans are only in the initiation stages Council may wish to consider a donation towards this memorial.

Further, Rowan McLeod was an active member of staff, and she served the community over the past year as a Recreation Leader and Summer Camp Leader, bringing energy, compassion and dedication to children’s programming that supported many local families. In accordance with the Life Recognition Policy, we intend to honor Rowan with a tree planting with invitation to the family. Rowan will be recognized on the [Shade Tree Recognition Plaque](#). Further tree plantings are also underway through the Shade Tree Recognition Program.

### **Strategic Action Plan Checklist:**

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance N/A

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

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?  
N/A

Funding is available in the Council discretionary budget of \$2,000.

**Reviewed By:**



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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**Respectfully Submitted by:**



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer