

Report to Council

Report Title: Community User Group Budget Requests – 2026 Budget Consideration Update

Prepared By: Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Department: Finance

Date: October 14, 2025

Report Number: FIN2025-26

File Number: C11FIN, F05

Attachments:

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number FIN2025-26 – Community User Group Budget Requests – 2026 Budget Consideration Update, prepared by Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer, for information purposes; and further, that Council provide direction on which, if any, of the submitted requests should be considered for inclusion in the 2026 Municipal Budget:

Report:

Background:

Report FIN2025-25 - Community User Group Budget Requests was originally presented to Council on September 23, 2025. At that meeting, Council requested that staff prepare a follow-up report providing additional details on each community request submission for further consideration and clarification as part of the 2026 Mayor's Budget process. This updated report incorporates that direction and includes expanded information on each proposal received.

Analysis:

Community User Group Request Summaries

Walkerton Minor Ball

Walkerton Minor Ball submitted several requests totaling \$1,230,000, including a new baseball diamond, field safety improvements, and upgrades to existing playing surfaces and lighting:

- **New Baseball Diamond** – \$1,000,000 request to construct a regulation grass infield diamond to accommodate program growth and attract tournaments.

- **Higher Fences/New Backstop** – \$20,000 request to enhance player and spectator safety through fence height extensions and a new backstop.
- **New Pitcher’s Mound/Batter’s Boxes** – \$10,000 request for installation of a permanent pitcher’s mound and improved clay batter’s boxes.
- **Ball Diamond Lighting Replacement** – \$200,000 request to replace aging and unsafe fixtures with new LED lighting, improving visibility and safety for night games and extending field use.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff have reviewed each of these items and note the following:

- **Ball Diamond Lighting:** This project has been approved and fully funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Grant and is included in the 2026 Capital Program. There is no impact to the municipal budget.
- **New Pitcher’s Mound:** Included in the 2026 Capital Requests at an estimated cost of \$7,500, with \$3,750 funded through donations.
- **Higher Fences:** This project was approved in the 2025 Budget and is scheduled for completion in Fall 2025.

The new baseball diamond, new backstop, and batter’s box reconstruction area currently not included in the 2026 Mayor’s Budget. However, staff will continue to explore these needs as part of the long-term facility and parks planning and will take the requests into consideration as we allocate available Municipal land and seek available grants in future budget years.

Walkerton Lawn Bowling Club

- **Clubhouse Air Quality Improvements** – \$6,000 request to install a split air-conditioning system in the clubhouse to address high summer temperatures during tournaments and events. The club hosts multiple inter-district tournaments, jitneys, and local gatherings throughout the season, with many senior participants. The installation would improve comfort and safety for players, volunteers, and visitors, creating a more desirable venue for regional competitions and supporting the long-term sustainability of the club’s programming.
- **Shed Replacement** – \$12,500 request to replace the deteriorated storage shed, which has roof damage and weathering. The new 16’ x 22’ structure would provide adequate space for lawn maintenance equipment and remove gasoline-powered tools from the clubhouse basement to reduce fire risk. The project includes dismantling and removing the existing shed and constructing the new one in its place. Relocating equipment will also enhance member safety by improving accessibility and eliminating hazards in the basement area.

The Walkerton Lawn Bowling Club, active since 1888 with approximately 49 members, continues to maintain its property to a high standard and attract players from across District 8 for tournaments, contributing to community recreation and tourism.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff have reviewed the requests and note that neither project has been included within the draft 2026 Budget at this time. These items may be reconsidered as part of future capital planning or through external funding opportunities to support community recreation facility improvements.

Victoria Jubilee Hall (VJH)

- **Facility Upgrades-** \$500,000+ request to complete extensive upgrades to the facility to support assembly occupancy as outlined in architect's assessment.

VJH is operated by a volunteer board that manages ongoing maintenance, programming, and community rentals. The facility remains an important heritage and cultural asset within downtown Walkerton, hosting performances, events, and gatherings that contribute to local arts, tourism, and economic activity.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff have reviewed the request and recognize the historical and community significance of the VJH. Upgrades are necessary and important to maintain this cultural asset. At the request of Mayor Peabody, \$150,000 has been included in the 2026 Budget to support this project. The funding is proposed to be drawn from the Community Heritage Reserve Fund, ensuring no immediate impact to the municipal tax levy while demonstrating the Municipality's commitment to preserving this key heritage facility.

Staff will continue to work with the Victoria Jubilee Hall Board to identify additional external funding sources or grants to assist in completing the full scope of work.

Bruce Grey Mentorship

- **Empowering Young People Through Positive Mentorship** – \$2,000 request to expand youth mentoring programs that provide local youth with positive role models, build resilience, and foster community engagement.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Historically, Bruce Grey Mentorship has received an annual donation of \$150 in accordance with the Municipality's Donation Policy. This level of support has been maintained in the 2026 Budget, and no additional funding has been included at this time.

Greenock Senior Citizens

Accessible Facility Use – The Greenock Senior Citizens Club, established in 1982 and affiliated with the United Senior Citizens of Ontario (Club #1295), has requested that the Municipality waive or minimize rental fees for the use of the Cargill Community Centre front room. The group currently meets in the basement of a local church in Pinkerton, but accessibility challenges—such as stairs to both the meeting area and washrooms, combined with limited parking and snow removal difficulties—have increasingly restricted participation for members.

The proposed relocation to the Cargill Community Centre would allow members to host their weekly carpet bowling sessions, twice-monthly euchre afternoons, and monthly meetings with social activities in a fully accessible, municipally owned facility. This transition would not only improve accessibility and comfort for

participants but also increase the use of the Cargill Community Centre, supporting its long-term sustainability. The group also notes that expanded programming for older adults could help the Municipality qualify as a Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC)—potentially opening access to Provincial funding opportunities in the future.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff recognize the social and recreational benefits of this request and have prepared a separate staff report for Council’s consideration outlining the financial implications of waiving rental fees for this group.

It is important to note that user fees are a key revenue source for the Municipality and play a vital role in mitigating tax rate increases by ensuring that facility costs are shared among users rather than being fully absorbed by the general tax levy. Should Council choose to waive or reduce these fees, the resulting financial gap would need to be funded through the municipal tax rate.

While this request does not require a direct expenditure in the 2026 Budget, staff will continue to work with the Greenock Senior Citizens to explore opportunities for fee adjustments or external funding sources that balance accessibility goals with the Municipality’s long-term financial sustainability.

Walkerton and District Hospital Foundation

- **X-Ray Machine Replacement** – The Walkerton and District Hospital Foundation submitted a request for \$200,000 in support of the purchase and installation of a new X-ray machine for the local hospital. The project is part of the Foundation’s ongoing efforts to upgrade essential diagnostic imaging equipment to ensure that residents across Brockton and surrounding communities have access to reliable and modern healthcare services.

The Foundation’s fundraising campaign highlights that the existing X-ray equipment is at the end of its service life and must be replaced to maintain diagnostic accuracy and patient safety. The investment will enhance the hospital’s ability to deliver timely care and support physicians, specialists, and emergency services operating in the region.

The Municipality of Brockton has a long-standing partnership with the Walkerton and District Hospital Foundation, having contributed to previous healthcare initiatives such as the Mammogram Machine Replacement Project, where Council approved annual donations of \$20,000 from 2022 to 2025, totaling \$80,000 in support.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff acknowledge the importance of maintaining quality local healthcare services and recognize the Walkerton and District Hospital Foundation’s continued impact within the community. As part of the 2026 budget planning process, staff have continued the Municipality’s annual donation of \$20,000 to the Foundation for Mayor Peabody’s consideration within the proposed Mayor’s Budget.

While the Foundation’s full request of \$200,000 has not been included in the 2026 Budget, staff recommend maintaining the annual contribution as a sustainable approach to supporting healthcare infrastructure while balancing fiscal responsibility.

Elmwood Community Centre Board (Brockton Share 50%)

Capital Projects – \$19,800 Request (Brockton Share)

The Elmwood Community Centre Board (ECCB) has submitted a 2026 capital funding request of \$39,600, shared equally between the Municipality of Brockton and the Municipality of West Grey (\$19,800 per municipality). The request includes four priority improvement projects that focus on safety, accessibility, and facility efficiency:

- **Stairway and Ramp Improvements** – Estimated cost \$13,000 (Brockton share \$6,600 after carry-forward funds). This project will complete the upgrades to the Banquet Hall stairway and ramp area by replacing carpet with a durable rubber surface, installing new handrails, and ensuring consistency with the main entrance design. Approximately \$6,400 remains from the 2025 budget to offset part of this work.
- **Pavilion Drainage Repair** – Estimated cost \$5,000 (Brockton share \$2,500). During heavy rainfall, water enters the pavilion kitchen and east-side area. The project includes extending the existing drain system, trenching and installing a perforated pipe, and adding a drainage grate to prevent flooding and improve accessibility for events.
- **Cooler Replacements** – Estimated cost \$8,000 (Brockton share \$4,000). The existing beverage coolers in the kitchen, bar, and banquet hall are outdated and inoperable. Two new 48-inch commercial sliding-door coolers are proposed to support facility rentals, Farmers' Week, and licensed events, ensuring reliable food and beverage storage.
- **Main Entrance Door Replacement** – Estimated cost \$20,000 (Brockton share \$10,000). The existing entrance doors are deteriorating, inefficient, and lack automatic operators. The replacement will include new thermally broken doors and frames, energy-efficient glass panels, and automatic door openers to improve accessibility and reduce heating and cooling costs.

The Elmwood Community Centre is a joint-use facility between Brockton and West Grey, hosting community events, weddings, and agricultural programs such as Farmers' Week. These upgrades will ensure continued safe and accessible operation while maintaining the facility's long-term viability as a regional community hub.

Staff Review and Budget Consideration:

Staff have reviewed the Elmwood Community Centre Board's submission and recognize the importance of maintaining accessibility, safety, and energy efficiency in this shared community facility. The draft 2026 Budget includes \$15,000 toward capital contributions and \$23,000 for operating costs, which represents an increase of \$5,000 from the prior year to assist with rising maintenance, utility, and programming expenses.

These allocations support the ongoing operation and upkeep of the facility while ensuring Brockton continues to meet its joint partnership obligations with West Grey. Funding is proposed through the Facilities Capital Reserve Fund and the annual operating budget. Staff will continue to coordinate with West Grey to align cost-sharing arrangements and ensure transparency in project delivery.

The following table summarizes the community user group budget requests received for consideration in the 2026 budget:

Community User Group Budget Requests:

Organization	Project	Amount Requested	Increase (if request fully granted)	Included in budget
Walkerton Minor Ball	Ball Diamond Lighting	\$200,000.00	1.54%	Yes
Walkerton Minor Ball	New Pitchers Mound/Fix Batters Boxes	\$10,000.00	0.08%	Partial
Walkerton Minor Ball	New Baseball Diamond	\$1,000,000.00	7.72%	Not at this time
Walkerton Minor Ball	Higher fences on infield on D1, D2 and D3 / New back stop on D1	\$20,000.00	0.15%	Partial Prior Budget
Walkerton Lawn Bowling Club	Clubhouse Air Quality Improvement	\$6,000.00	0.05%	Not at this time
Walkerton Lawn Bowling Club	Shed Replacement	\$12,500.00	0.10%	Not at this time
Victoria Jubilee Hall	Fire Inspection Orders	\$500,000.00	3.86%	Partial
Bruce Grey Mentorship	Empowering Young People Through Positive Mentorship	\$2,000.00	0.02%	Partial – Donation Policy
Greenock Senior Citizens	Reduced Fee Rental Request	Unknown	0.00%	No - Separate Report
Walkerton and District Hospital Foundation	X-Ray Replacement	\$200,000.00	1.54%	Partial
Elmwood Community Centre	Stairway Improvements	\$3,300.00	0.03%	Partial – Direction needed
Elmwood Community Centre	Pavillion Drainage Repair Estimated cost \$5,000.	\$2,500.00	0.02%	Partial – Direction needed
Elmwood Community Centre	Coolers Estimated cost \$8,000	\$4,000.00	0.03%	Partial – Direction needed
Elmwood Community Centre	Main Door Replacement Estimated cost \$20,000.	\$10,000.00	0.08%	Partial – Direction needed
Total		\$1,970,300.00	15.21%	

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 Yes
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community Yes
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life Yes
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment N/A
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development Yes
- Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance Yes

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

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

The total budgetary impact from the requests received are outlined within the chart and how they would impact the total 2026 Budget.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer