

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| TO: | CHAIR AND MEMBERS FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 19, 2011 |
| FROM: | MARTIN HAYWARD CITY TREASURER / CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER |
| SUBJECT: | 2012 BUDGET "APP" CONTEST |

| |
|-----------------------|
| RECOMMENDATION |
|-----------------------|

That, on the recommendation of the City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to provide a conditional grant of up to \$10,000 to UnLondon, a local nonprofit organization, for the purposes of hosting a contest to create budget related technology applications ("apps"); it being noted that funding for this grant can be accommodated within existing operating budget.

| |
|--|
| PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER |
|--|

None.

| |
|-------------------|
| BACKGROUND |
|-------------------|

The annual budget process is a key opportunity to engage the community in municipal government. Council has directed Civic Administration to seek new approaches to encourage and enhance community engagement in the 2012 budget cycle.

Civic Administration has had preliminary discussions with UnLondon about partnering to host a contest to develop web, social networking and mobile applications (apps) using open data on the municipal budget. The Corporation already provides data sets on the budget back to 2001 as a part of the Open Data initiative.

UnLondon is a new local nonprofit organization established to "challenge and embrace new ideas related to new technologies and social platforms through the education and entertainment of the membership and the community at large." UnLondon has over 200 members predominantly in the local web development, design and digital media communities, and operates out of the UnLab at the Research Park at the University of Western Ontario.

UnLondon has expressed an interest in working with Civic Administration to host a contest during November and early December of 2011. The contest would have three main objectives:

1. To encourage the development of innovative budget related applications (eg: an iPhone app) that provide a new way for Londoners to be engaged in the 2012 budget process;
2. To showcase the local talent that exists in London; and
3. To build a stronger partnerships between the City, UnLondon and the local web development, design and digital media communities.

The contest would award cash prizes for the best applications developed in several categories. Similar contests have been held successfully in other municipalities. For example, the City of Ottawa's Apps4Ottawa contest offered \$50,000 in prize money across several categories and resulted in the development of over 50 apps.

Civic Administration is recommending the authorization of a conditional grant of up to \$10,000 to UnLondon for the purpose of administering the contest. The funding would be used primarily for prize money as well as to cover the costs of administering the contest including promotions, a launch event, and any technical or support costs directly associated with administration of the contest. Other community partners may also be involved as contributors of cash or other prizes (for example, small business start-up supports for the most entrepreneurial team).

“App” submissions would be judged in a number of categories based on four general criteria, each given equal weighting:

1. Educational Value – the app makes it easier for citizens to understand the municipal budget, including the business planning and budgeting process, how tax dollars are spent, and how decisions are made;
2. Community Engagement – the app encourages citizens to be engaged in the budget process, including providing information about public participation meetings and other opportunities to provide input throughout the budget process;
3. Technical Merit – the app demonstrates technical skill, functional complexity, and is developed to meet web accessibility standards; and
4. Aesthetic Principles – the app design is attractive with a simple app user interface.

Judging will take place in early December with the winners announced prior to December 15, 2011. Apps will be made available to the public at that time. Prizes will be awarded at the first Council public participation meeting on the budget scheduled in January 2012.

| |
|-------------------|
| CONCLUSION |
|-------------------|

Council and Civic Administration have a shared interest in encouraging community engagement in the budget process. A contest for the purpose of creating budget related apps would not only involve and celebrate local talent in the process of developing apps, but also provide a new way for the community to learn and be engaged in the budget process through the use of the apps.

The funding to support the recommendation is available through existing budgets. The cost is also significantly less than if the Corporation were to contract with a private organization to develop apps on the budget.

Acknowledgement is extended to Jim Barber, John Bontje, Ian Collins, Joseph Edwards, Sharon Houde, Larry Palarchio, Jon Pilon and Ashleigh Weeden for their involvement in and support for this initiative.

| | |
|---|--|
| PREPARED BY: | CONCURRED BY: |
| | |
| KATE GRAHAM MANAGER, CORPORATE INITIATIVES | ELAINE GAMBLE MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS |

| |
|--|
| RECOMMENDED BY: |
| |
| MARTIN HAYWARD CITY TREASURER / CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER |

cc: Jeff Fielding, City Manager