

Victoria County Historical Society
Deputation to Council
May 22, 2018

The Victoria County Historical Society is a not-for-profit heritage organization that runs the Olde Gaol museum at 50 Victoria Ave North in Lindsay. It is a registered charity. The museum serves the community in many ways and manages projects that are both local and national in scope. The museum has a permanent collection of approximately 10,000 artefacts valued at \$500,000 for insurance. Recent exhibitions and projects include WWI Comes to Life: an exhibition that shared the lesser known stories of the Canadian men and women who served behind the frontlines in the support and supply networks during the First World War; and Their Votes Counted, a 2017 exhibition commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of women voting for the first time in a Canadian federal election. The museum provides educational programming, lectures, workshops, walking tours, exhibits and serves as a space for other community groups to meet. There is no doubt that the museum provides a valuable service and contributes to an exceptional quality of life to the people of Lindsay, Kawartha Lakes and beyond.

The city generously gave the society use of the building and a lease was signed in 2000 which the museum has resided in since 2011. Over the years the society has spent \$500,000 on capital upgrades to the building. The lease is up for renewal in 2019.

The society has funded its operations and projects through both grants and fundraising. Unfortunately, most grant programs won't fund operating expenses with the exception of the Community Museums Operating Grant (otherwise known as CMOG), funded by the govt. of Ontario. CMOG is the only grant that funds operating expenses that is available for museums such as ours. Unfortunately, in 2015 the grant application we submitted wasn't successful and then in 2016 the grant was closed for review, so that we were no longer able to reapply. It remains closed for the 2018-2019 application year. In 2015, 2016 and part of 2017 operating expenses and salaries of staff at the museum were funded through the WWI and TVC grants administration and professional fees categories. As these projects are complete now, we cannot continue to fund the museum in this way. The museum staff have applied for additional project grants so that portions of

them can be applied to operating expenses but so far these applications have not been successful so have therefore run out of funds to operate the museum.

According to a 2014 Ontario Museums Association report, municipal support is key to a museum's success. This has been demonstrated for the museums in Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon. This report highlighted that 84% of Ontario museums are municipally funded and that municipal revenues represent about one-third of revenues of museums with budgets under \$140,000. The report notes museums are significant economic drivers. Museums spend \$758 million in communities across the province; they employ 10,765 Ontarians. Museums are intertwined with the tourism industry and contribute to the \$28B cultural GDP.

The city of Kawartha Lakes funds Fenelon Falls' Maryboro lodge and supports the Boyd Museum in Bobcaygeon. The Olde Gaol Museum is asking for city relief support in funding hydro, water, lawn and parking lot maintenance and insurance up to \$12,500/year. These are specific requests related to operating expenses not eligible under granting programs that we are applying for. They will enable the museum to fundraise to support programming and to focus on assessing our funding model to ensure the museum is sustainable into the future.

In January, 2018 the Museum Manager resigned and the management of the museum was taken over by the volunteers on the board. Although many of us have full time jobs, we support the museum with our time, expertise and financial resources. Volunteers have been planning fundraising and carrying out fundraisers to sustain the museum whilst writing grant applications in order to fund future projects relevant to the people of Kawartha Lakes.

The City's Strategic Plan has identified the goals of fostering a vibrant and growing economy and an exceptional quality of life. According to the Ontario Museums Association report a museum brings economic value to a community. In 2016, in Ontario alone, tourism receipts brought \$1.2B and visitor spending contributed \$1B in municipal tax revenue. The 2017 Government of Canada Survey of Heritage Institutions reported museums and other heritage institutions in Canada generate over \$2.5B in revenue, attendance to all heritage institutions reached a record 75.3 million in 2015, and the heritage sector employs 36,300 people.

The museum is a vital asset to the community and we ask that you thoughtfully consider the request. The funds requested are desperately needed to keep the museum open for the next year until the board is able to develop a sustainable fundraising plan and see the efforts of that plan come to fruition.