REVIEW OF GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS - ARGYLE

COUNCIL PRESENTATION AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

WHY A REVIEW OF OUR GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS PROCESS?

What are the identified issues with our current process?

- Application form is dated, the questions are somewhat repetitive, and the information is not used well or readily available;
- Applicants fill in the same information, regardless of amount requested;
- Mostly paper format, with application forms submitted both in person and electronically –this has resulted in human error of omission
- The process is entirely application based and reactive – there is no strategic element to the current process, and no pre-decision on where the funds ought to be invested (ie recreation, arts and culture, trails…)
- Not all applicants are filling all the information properly (the biggest culprit is the budget), staff has not denied applications, but technically could;
- Some applications are coming in under an organization name, but the funds are filtered through that organization for another fund-raising purpose;
- The system encourages the following - The more the ask, the more the grant issued;
- Exceptions to the rules are made based on applicant needs; and these needs are often based on regional special events funded by multiple parties, "forcing" staff/council to find the funds;
- The process is very time consuming for a staff person to manage; staff time could be better used to analyze the applications rather than gather applications;
- The decision making is very efficient, but lacking in effectiveness.

WHY NOW?

Final year of the community halls special grants;

First year of the fire department grants supporting vehicle purchases;

Increased special requests, particularly from outside Argyle, with no real guidance from Council which requests are important to consider;

Timing was therefore considered appropriate - lets look at the past contributions and whether the programs are meeting Council intentions and priorities….

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY? – WHERE DOES COUNCIL INVEST THEIR GRANT FUNDS?

Average Grants issued
by type (2017-2020)
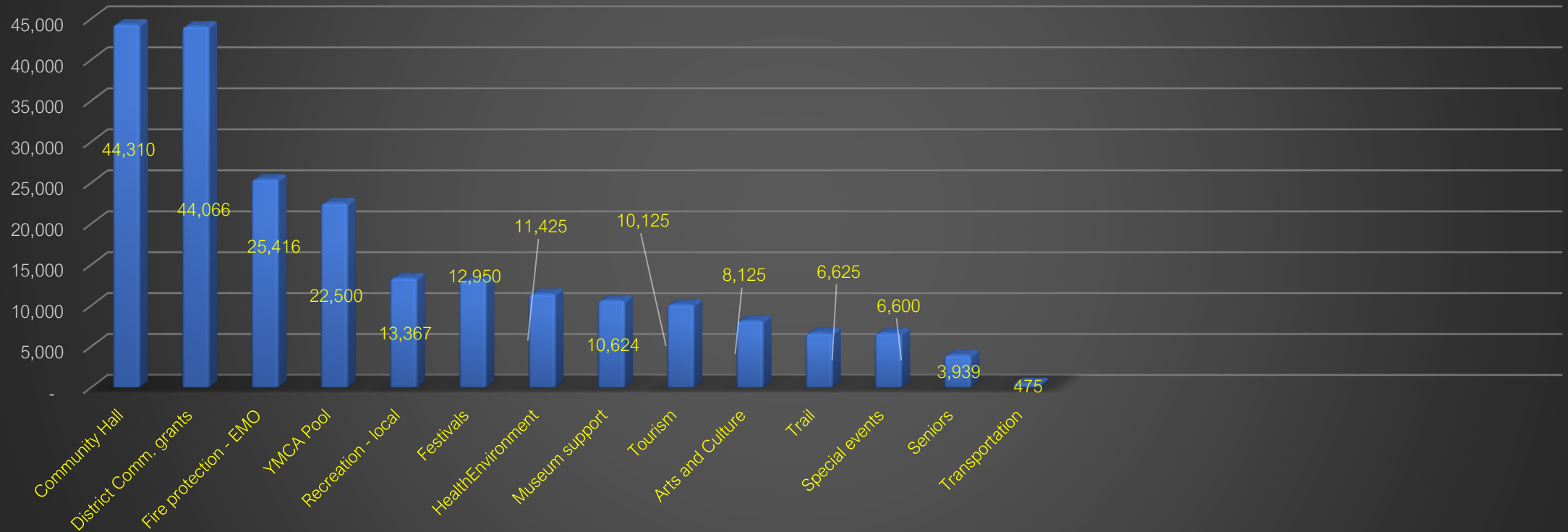
On average, $220,500 is invested in grants to organizations annually

this represents the most we have ever distributed, with the exceptions being for large projects (Salle Pere Maurice LeBlanc, new Archives)

This amount specifically excludes regional partnerships and items we own (I.e. Airport, Mariners Center)

Community halls, District Community Grants (including community clean up grants) and Fire represent the top 3 investments

Community halls' policy is ending this year (average $45,000 annually, was $15,000 in the final year)

Transportation and trail investment is surprisingly low, considering these topics are front of mind for recreational development and accessible transportation options.
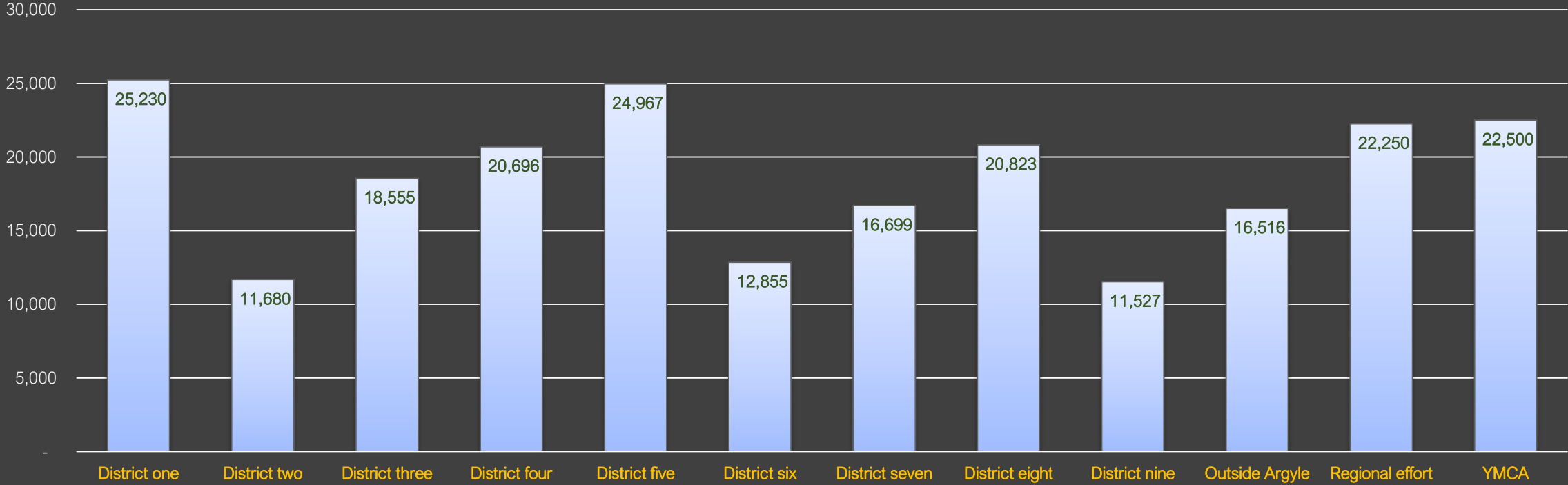
Reading through applications, festival funding isn't necessarily for festivals, and other applications are not complete and may not be for the stated purpose.

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY? – DISTRICT ALLOCATION (AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNTS)

Average Grants to organizations by District (2017-2020)

District	Amount
District one	25,230
District two	11,680
District three	18,555
District four	20,696
District five	24,967
District six	12,855
District seven	16,699
District eight	20,823
District nine	11,527
Outside Argyle	16,516
Regional effort	22,250
YMCA	22,500

Total Grants by location - 2017-2020
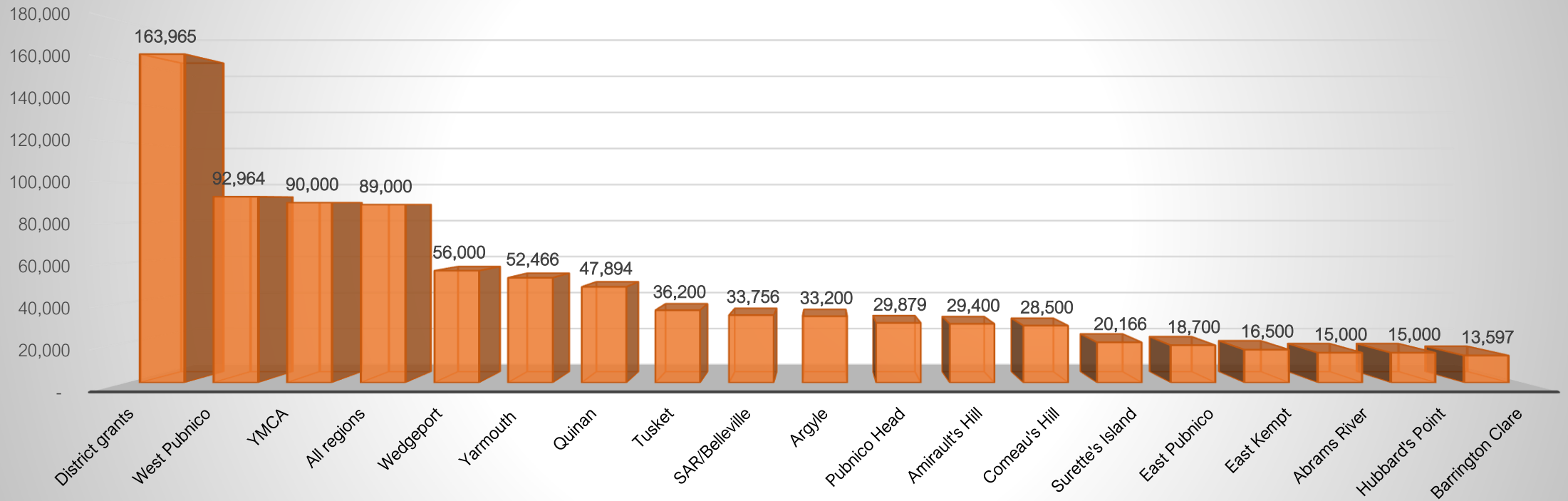
WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY? – TOTAL GRANTS BY LOCATION (OVER 4 YEARS)

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

Most districts are evenly treated financially, without setting it in policy.

The amounts are influenced primarily by our special community hall funding.

The lower figures are primarily a result of less community halls in those districts.

Other highlights include investments in fire trucks in District 1 and 5.

About $5,000 in each district represents the district community grants and Community clean up grants.

Regional effort represents grants that benefit all of Argyle (ie Yarmouth Ground Search and Rescue)

POSSIBLE FUTURE STATE – A TASTE OF WHAT COULD BE

Applications are 100% automated - online applications – reducing staff prep time.

Previous applicants would have their information pre-populated online, to minimize repetition;

Applications with missing info would not be accepted

Software would allow council/staff to easily access any and all applications at any time;

Applications would automatically sort by nature, size of request, etc allowing Council to make better decisions

Council may consider passing on smaller requests to staff and focus on larger investments

Council chooses how much money is available for key investments in advance

Organizations that receive annual equal grants could be pre-qualified at the will of council - application is made easier for those organizations;

Larger requests would be forced to submit more information, very large requests would trigger a mandatory presentation to Council

A system that is both efficient and effective in meeting Council's community and regional goals

A transformed, one stop shop for all applications for non-profit organizations

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU!

Acknowledgement that our grants to organizations policy requires renewal and adjustment.

→

Permission to further investigate optional processes to address the issues stated by administration.

→

Develop a quick survey for council that will provide staff with an idea of your guiding principles that will influence our recommended approach.

→

Accept that the solution will include a form of automation (online application).

→

Help us along the process, with a deadline to present by February 2020.