

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

<b>TO:</b> Shane Bourke, City Manager	<b>DATE:</b> April 7, 2025
<b>FROM:</b> Danielle Whiteway, Chief Financial Officer	<b>MEETING:</b> City Council
<b>REPORT WRITER:</b> Lisa Kerkhof, Games Manager	
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games Update	

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council receive this report for information.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL / COMMITTEE DIRECTIONS

At the August 22, 2022 City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:  
 Council direct Administration to work with the local Special Olympics Committee to put together a bid package.

### BACKGROUND

Grande Prairie was successfully selected as the host city for the Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games 2025. In collaboration with City staff and community members, a Host Organizing Committee has been established to oversee the planning and ensure the successful execution of the games. Administration is working closely with Special Olympics Alberta to ensure all aspects of the event are thoughtfully considered and well-coordinated.

### ANALYSIS

The Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games 2025 will take place from July 11-13, bringing together over 1,000 athletes from 20 affiliates across Alberta, including a small contingent from the Northwest Territories. Athletes qualified for this Provincial event during the summer of 2024, choosing their respective sports based on their qualifications and achievements in prior competitions.

Athletes and their coaches will begin arriving in Grande Prairie on July 11, where they will stay in various hotels throughout the City for the duration of the weekend. The games will officially kick off in the evening with an Opening Ceremony at Bonnett’s Energy Centre.

This event is designed to be inclusive, and as such, spectators will have free access to all events throughout the weekend, including the Opening Ceremony.

The sports being offered at the summer games and their respective locations are as follows:

- Swimming and Basketball at the Eastlink Centre
- Rhythmic Gymnastics at the Grande Prairie Gymnastics Centre
- Golf at The Dunes Golf & Winter Club
- Softball at South Bear Creek Park
- Powerlifting at the Activity and Reception Centre
- Soccer at Rotary Fields
- Bocce and Athletics at Legion Track and Field
- 10-pin Bowling at Bowling Stones Bowling Alley

The Host Organizing Committee is excited to announce that Goodwill has sponsored the Athlete Ambassador Program. Through this initiative, the City has hired three athletes to assist with the marketing efforts for the Games. The goal for this program is to connect the ambassadors with local sponsors and industry leaders while providing hands-on business experience. This will not only highlight the talents of the athletes but also introduce the community to Special Olympics and the valuable programming offered in Grande Prairie. To date, the ambassadors have had the opportunity to tour city facilities, speak at two Rotary Clubs, participate in a TV interview with Eastlink Community TV, experience hands-on learning at the Pomeroy Hotel, and visit the Grant Berg Gallery. Administration is recommitting to the Rotary Inclusion Partnership, which supports adults with intellectual disabilities and employers, providing meaningful employment opportunities.

The Host Organizing Committee organized two successful fundraising initiatives. Touch A Truck that took place in September 2024 and attracted over 500 community members, who had the opportunity to interact with large vehicles. This event raised over \$7,000 for the Games.

The second initiative, Polar Plunge, was held outside at the Eastlink Centre on February 28. In collaboration with Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run. This event raised an impressive \$21,000 and was largely supported by agencies and first responders of Grande Prairie. The funds raised will be equally distributed between Special Olympics Alberta, the local Special Olympics division, and the Games operating budget.

On April 1, the Host Organizing Committee hosted a 100 days until the games event. The evening brought together local supporters, volunteers, and community members together to celebrate the countdown and build anticipation for the upcoming games.

With the continued support of our sponsors, partners, and volunteers, the Host Organizing Committee is confident that these games will not only showcase the athleticism and determination of the participants but also highlight the strength of the City's community spirit.

### **Relationship to City Council's Areas of Focus / Strategic Priorities**

Quality of Life, Inclusive and Caring Communities, Engaging Relationships

### **Environmental Impact**

N/A

### **Economic Impact**

The Games are anticipated to have a \$1,000,000 economic impact for the City.

## **Social Impact**

It is anticipated that 300 community members will be required to assist with volunteer positions over the weekend to ensure smooth operation of the event.

## **Relevant Statutes / Master Plans / City Documents**

None.

## **Risk**

None.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The Committee is engaging with the local Special Olympics Grande Prairie affiliate to ensure a successful event, as well as meeting regularly with Special Olympics Alberta.

## **BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The overall budget for the event is \$805,000. Council has approved \$100,000 for this event over three years. Other funding sources include Special Olympics Alberta, sponsorship, athlete registration fees, and additional grant opportunities. As of April 1, 91% of the cash budget and 95% of requested in-kind contributions have been secured. The committee is currently awaiting responses for one provincial grant application and four large sponsorship requests.

## **SUMMARY / CONCLUSION**

The Special Olympics Summer Games will not only highlight the talents and determination of the athletes but also bring our community together in support of inclusion and unity. This event will inspire local engagement, create lasting connections, and leave a positive, lasting impact on everyone involved. Administration recommends Committee receive this report for information.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None.