

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA**

**REPORT NO. CSD-2025-0007**

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF  
COUNCIL**

July 9, 2025

**SUBJECT: Service Delivery Review of the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture,  
Georgina Military Museum, and Georgina Chamber of Commerce**

---

**1. RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council receive Report No. CSD-2025-0007 prepared by the Community Services Department and Corporate Services Department dated July 9, 2025, regarding the Service Delivery and Funding Model Review for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, the Georgina Military Museum and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce.
2. That Council approve the following annual funding amounts from the Non-Profit Grant Program for a five-year term (2026-2030) with an annual 2% inflationary increase for each of the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, the Georgina Military Museum and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce, and direct the Treasurer to list them as separate line items in the Budget moving forward:

Georgina Centre of Arts and Culture	\$165,000
Georgina Military Museum	\$ 28,000
Georgina Chamber of Commerce	\$ 67,000

3. That Council provide staff the delegated authority to implement a 5-year service agreement with an optional 1-year extension, and Key Performance Indicators for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce.
4. That Council provide staff the delegated authority to implement a 10-year lease agreement for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture for the purpose of grant submissions.
5. That any service agreements with Town funding that is greater than \$100,000 annually shall require an annual financial audit, that specifically includes a review of the organization's internal controls as part of such audit

**2. PURPOSE:**

Staff were directed at the September 11, 2024 Council meeting through Council Report No. SI-2024-0018 and Council Resolution C-2024-0270 item #2 to submit a

report to Council with the analysis of in-house vs external service delivery, the analysis of moving the funding allocation to a separate budget line item, and details of a 5 year service agreement for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce and longer term lease agreement for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture. Through Council discussion, it was determined that the Georgina Military Museum fall under a similar review with respect to funding only.

### **3. BACKGROUND:**

#### **Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture**

The Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture (the Centre) formerly known as the Georgina Arts Council and the Georgina Arts Centre and Gallery was established in 2001 to provide arts programming on behalf of the Town in addition to exhibitions, events, outreach, educational opportunities and maintain community partnerships as per the details of the existing Programming Services Agreement between the Town of Georgina and the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, for the period of January 1 2016 to December 31, 2026.

The Service Agreement outlines details of the operation, management, services provided, goals and objectives along with Town grant approval and payment information among other regular obligations and accountability of the Centre.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on the service agreement does not meet current practices and need to be updated to include online data and visitor data in a revised service agreement. The Centre's current data includes over 700 volunteer hours and a 26% increase in visitors over 2023 with 18% of visitors being non-local.

#### **Georgina Chamber of Commerce**

The Georgina Chamber of Commerce was founded 50 years ago and based on the research conducted to date by Town Staff and the Chamber, the Town and the Chamber have had a relationship of working together over these 50 years. The Town has records dating back to 2006, indicate that the Town of Georgina provided the Chamber of Commerce through a more formal request with \$66,000 to support the Chamber's annual Highland Gathering, Home Show and Gala Events and the provision of tourism information services from the location they occupied at the time on Woodbine Avenue. Since 2006, Town funding has helped support a range of programs offered by the Chamber as well as recognizing that the Chamber was providing tourism information and distribution.

With the re-establishment of the former Business Development Office as the Economic Development and Tourism Division in 2008, together with the Town's focus on Tourism Development, Town staff have continually evaluated how the funding model should evolve, recognizing that the majority of single tier and similar sized municipalities do not fund their chambers to the same level. With the increased focus

on the Town's tourism brand and that tourism marketing is integral to the work undertaken by not only the Economic Development and Tourism Division, but also the Community Services Department, it is important that the Town lead and manage the Town's tourism marketing and branding.

Based on the research conducted over the years, Town staff have moved away from funding projects and using KPI's that are related to the day-to-day activities and projects that Chambers typically deliver to their membership and that form part of their fundraising efforts (i.e. workshops, small business week events, vendor show, networking events). Given that these day-to-day services are no longer service delivery items the funding to the Chamber has been reduced over the last two years. There have also been discussions to ensure that the overlap of services is eliminated.

The purpose of this report is to further review the way in which the Town funds the Chamber, and to streamline this funding and reporting process for the Chamber. This report and the future service agreement will also further clarify service delivery expectations and strengthen the ongoing relationship the Town has with the Chamber.

### **Georgina Military Museum**

The Georgina Military Museum (the Museum) is a recipient of annual Town funding for operations and events. Traditionally, the Museum operates with volunteers only and no paid staff. The Museum completes the Non-profit Grant funding application annually and has no other responsibilities or service obligations with the Town. The property where the Museum resides is rented by Georgina Military Museum.

The Museum serves our community and presents tourism opportunities by collecting, archiving, preserving and presenting artifacts of the struggles of war from all sides. With over 1000 volunteer hours, the Museum provides tours, educational programming and events.

## **4. ANALYSIS:**

### **The Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture**

The Centre received Council approved grant funds of \$140,000 through the non-profit organization grant process in 2025, \$136,300 in 2024, and \$110,000 in 2023. The approved funds in 2025 were a 2.7% increase over 2024, and a 27.3% increase over 2023, however, the 2025 approval was 15% less than the \$165,000 requested in the 2025 application. Staff operating costs experienced a 25% increase in 2023 and a 26% increase in 2024. Staff operating costs are expected to increase annually to keep in line with the Centre's growth, staff expertise, cost of living to stay competitive and to allow for staff retention. However, the Centre will be required to work within the budget approved by the Board and the funding allocations recommended in this report to remain financially sustainable.

The request from the Centre in 2025, for a grant of \$165,000 or an 18% increase over the funding approved for 2025, will still not bring the Centre to ideal staffing and salary levels based on market data below, however, providing this amount in 2026 is a significant step forward to financial sustainability and achieving ideal staffing by having guaranteed annual funding as part of a service agreement, at their requested amount from 2025 and it will be increased 2% per year for inflation thereafter. This combined with creative and innovative ways to continue to increase and expand other revenue streams, should set the Centre up for ideal staffing and salary levels at the end of the 5-year agreement, without increasing the Town's grant above the normal inflationary increases moving forward.

### Historical Audited Financials

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Town Grant	110,000	110,000	110,000	136,300
Other Grants	48,865	51,765	*99,557	40,556
Revenue	48,417	35,404	72,722	116,046
Staff	-92,504	-107,245	-133,902	-168,934
Expense	-112,128	-85,398	-105,120	-112,823
Profit	2650	4526	43,257	11,145

\*\$90K Central Counties Tourism Grant to purchase the event tent.

### Comparison of current staffing model, ideal staffing model and corporate or 'in house' staffing model.

Staffing Model	# of Staff	Type	Total Wages	Staff Model Total
<i>The current staffing model includes a FT Executive Director, a PT Art Coordinator, a PT Administrative Coordinator, PT Marketing and volunteers to assist with front line customer service. This model does not meet the needs of the Centre or provide adequate coverage or skill set required to run a gallery. The result is staff burnout and high staff turnover levels.</i>				
<b>Non-Profit Current</b>	1FT 4PT	FT ED	\$55,000	
		PT AC	\$35,000	
		PT APC	\$30,000	
		2 x PT	\$40,000	<b>\$160,000</b>
<i>Based on our research and the size of the gallery, the ideal staffing model in either the gallery or corporate setting would include 3 full time staff and 3 part time staff. To be competitive, staff costs would be in the range of \$165,000 to \$200,000 per year.</i>				
<b>Non-Profit Ideal</b>	3FT 3PT	FT ED	\$70,000	
		FT AC	\$40,000	
		FT APC	\$40,000	
		3 x PT	\$40,000	<b>\$190,000</b>
<i>Salaries, including payroll burden have been estimated based on the Town's current pay grids for similar supervisory and administrative positions.</i>				
<b>Corporate (Town)</b>	3FT 3PT	FT ED	\$130,000*	
		FT AC	\$78,000*	
		FT APC	\$78,000*	
		3 x PT	\$52,000*	<b>\$338,000*</b>

*This model does not include Communications or IT services costs. Outside research suggests an extra \$56,000 for a final total of approximately **\$394,000***

ED= Executive Director AC= Artistic Coordinator APC=Admin/Program/Coordinator PT=Part Time

Corporate wages based on industry standard research

**\*Includes 'payroll burden costs' of \$78,000 and does not include Communications or IT services cost. Add \$56,000 based on outside research.**

In addition to the 'payroll burden costs', under a corporate model, the Centre would be leaning more on the maintenance team for items that the centre is now responsible for including utility bills, regular maintenance and cleaning services. Further, under the corporate model, the Centre would be leaning more on the Cultural Division, IT services and Communication services. IT services extra costs would include staff time for set up, technical infrastructure and website services. Communications services extra costs would include adoption and review of existing branding, adoption, review and maintenance of existing website and would also fall under the IT & Communications procedures.

Since the pandemic, the Centre has reached a new level of cultural awareness and service resulting in strengthening the community through many forms of arts and culture exhibitions, programs and events. The Centre's current existence puts them on the map and in line with many other well-established arts and culture providers.

Comparing art centres involves many factors that does not allow for an accurate comparison. An example of a comparison is below. Adding to this, is the full transformation the Centre has experienced since covid including a staff re-organization along with a full board change over.

### 2024 Gallery Comparison

Location (# staff)	Population	Operating Expenses	Municipal Funding	Percent of Operating
Georgina (2.5)	50,000	281,757	136,300	48%
Aurora	55,445	1,664,965	549,569	33%
Stouffville*(4.5)	45,837	633,830	495,280	78%
Kawartha (3)	75,423	230,000	200,000	86%
Orillia** (5)	31,166	670,000	180,000	30%
Stratford (2)	33,232	298,000	60,000	20%

\*Stouffville - Operated by Library as of 2021. \$56K of Library resources allocated to Art Centre.

\*\*Orillia is an art gallery and museum.

Of the municipalities researched, 50% received funding through budget line items for the term of Council or longer, including Town of Aurora, Kawartha Lakes and Orillia.

Based on the above analysis, it can be noted that it costs less to run the Centre externally opposed to bringing it in-house. Based on current staffing levels, it would cost the Town \$181,000 more per year to deliver the service in-house. This is above and beyond the \$165,000 grant proposed for 2026. Based on ideal staffing levels, it would cost the Town \$204,000 more per year to run the Centre in-house, which is also in addition to the

\$165,000 proposed grant for 2026. The difference of \$23,000, between current and ideal staffing levels, would be funded through new or increased revenue streams if brought in-house, which aligns to the same expectation that ideal staffing levels and increases be achieved through new or increased revenue sources if delivered externally. Therefore, the net additional tax levy impact of bringing the Centre in-house, based on current staffing models, would be a minimum tax levy increase of \$181,000 annually or a 0.3%.

### **Georgina Chamber of Commerce**

Unlike the comparison that have been undertaken with respect the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, it is challenging to find comparisons of the level of funding provided by similar sized lower tier municipalities to their respective chambers.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Direct Funding</b>	<b>In-kind or other support provided to Chambers</b>
Newmarket	No	Lease of building space provided in exchange for the dissemination of tourism info from the location.
Aurora	No	Aurora provides sponsorship in the amount of \$12,000 for 4 annual events run by the chamber.
King	No	King partners with the Chamber on a business directory and contributes \$3,000 to the Business Excellence awards
Stouffville	No	Town pays a membership fee to the Chamber and supports Chamber events by purchasing tickets to the Mayor's Spring Dinner and Fall Gala. As a member most networking events and special interest group events are included in the price for all Town staff. The Town also sponsors certain events throughout the year as budget allows.
Kawartha	Provide up to \$20,000 for core funding.	City provides space within a municipal building and up to \$20,000 for visitor engagement activities.
Meaford	Unknown	Funds provided for tourism services.

While the Town has formal records of funding the chamber going back to 2006, the table below indicates the funding provided to the Chamber since 2021.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual Grant Funding</b>	<b>Additional Funding Support Provided</b>
2021	\$83,990	Examples: Purchase of 2 booth spaces at Discover Georgina Show, Chamber Membership, tickets to Business Excellence and Milestone Awards, paid attendance at business events/breaknets/Mayors Luncheon, funding through the Economic Development Grant, ad space in the Tourism Guide.
2022	\$83,550	
2023	\$83,500	
2024	\$64,000	
2025	\$67,460	

Staff acknowledge that attendance at Chamber events provides Council and staff with further opportunities to network and celebrate the business community, but this additional support also indicates the Town's commitment to supporting the work undertaken by the Chamber. It is important to note that with Chambers relying on membership dues to fund operations it can be challenging for Chambers in smaller municipalities that do not have significant corporate membership dues to rely on. Below is a cost comparison of membership fees from the Chambers/Boards of Trade that exist in the comparator municipalities. It is also noted that the Georgina Chamber of Commerce is made of primarily home-based and small businesses with 1-5 employees.

### Membership Cost Comparisons

Georgina	\$205.00 plus tax per year
Newmarket/York Central	1-2 Employees = \$282.00 per year 3-10 Employees = \$369.00 per year 11-25 Employees = \$462.00 per year 26-50 Employees = \$522.00 per year 51-100 Employees = \$648.00 per year 100+ Employees = \$825.00 per year Non-Profit = \$282.00 per year
Aurora	1-2 Employees = \$242.00 per year 3-10 Employees = \$305.00 per year 11-25 Employees = \$390.00 per year 26-50 Employees = \$490.00 per year 51-100 Employees = \$635.00 per year 100-500 Employees = \$775.00 per year 501+ Employees = \$995 per year Non-Profit/Charity = \$195.00 per year
Stouffville	Classic membership = \$240.00 Connector membership = \$480.00 Builders membership = \$1,500.00 Leaders membership = \$3,000.00 Stakeholder membership = \$6,000.00
Kawartha	3-Star membership= from \$315.00 per year 4-Star membership= from \$595.00 per year 5-Star membership=from \$995.00 per year
Orillia	Yearly Membership fee = \$236.25 One-time Administration Fee = \$25.00 Additional Options: \$5.00 Extra Category Listing
Meaford	Individual/Non-business = \$75.00 per year Non-Profit Organization = \$75.00 per year Self-Employed = \$120.00 per year 1-3 Employees = \$180.00 per year 4-6 Employees = \$210.00 per year 7-20 Employees = \$300.00 per year 20+ Employees = \$ 350.00 per year

Notwithstanding the success in recruiting new members over the past few years, the economic climate, turnover of business operations and closures it has been difficult for the Georgina Chamber to retain members. Due to these challenges, membership in the Chamber has hovered around 325 over the past 5 years.

The historical relationship has been to support the chamber with funding for events, programs and the distribution of tourism information. This relationship assumes that should the Town no longer require these services there would be no expenses on behalf of the Chamber. However, based on discussions with the Executive Director Jen Anderson, it is clear that the Chamber would be unable to fund operations without the Town's contribution regardless of the services they provide to the Town. In this regard, and given the work that the Chamber does to support small businesses in the Town of Georgina, it is desirable for the continuation of this funding relationship and agreement with the Chamber.

It is also recognized that the Chamber as a not profit is eligible to receive funding for 6-16 weeks for up to 100% of funding of the adult minimum hourly wage to assist with funding of their summer students, whereas the public sector is only eligible for up to 50%. Therefore, the Chamber is able to more cost effectively able to staff the tourism ambassador trailer at De La Salle and provide ambassador services at other summer events.

As a result of concerns expressed and the desire to ensure there is no overlap in services, Town Staff and Chamber Staff have continually worked to improve communications to better understand programs being proposed and undertaken by each other. Town staff have also reached out to the Town of Meaford who have had agreements with their Chamber for tourism services to understand and learn from some of the challenges they encountered. The Town also hosted a group of Schulich Business Students for a school project wherein the students conducted a review of the Town's Tourism Brand as a research assignment. Consideration was also given to the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

It is also important to consider that the Georgina Chamber of Commerce has recently approved a new Strategy which outlines their four areas of focus. Chambers are membership driven and it is important to recognize that if our Chamber is to be successful in retaining membership they must provide services of benefit to their members.

With tourism being a key area of focus of Georgina's Corporate Strategic Plan and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Town's staff are accountable for delivering on these strategies and activities and the messaging to support same. In this regard, Town Staff have been working to improve the Town's tourism brand messaging with a dedicated external facing Tourism Website and associated social media channels. This allows various Town Departments to work closer together on the dissemination of information and ensure a more comprehensive Town approach to creating a greater awareness of town tourism assets, attracting external visitors to these assets and promoting increased spending. This dedicated tourism website helps to amplify the



Town's tourism assets and helps ensure external audiences receive consistent messaging with respect to Georgina's Tourism offerings.

In consideration of the above, and the work that Chamber typically does to support local businesses, staff recommend the Town enter into a 5-year service agreement with the Chamber with the following KPI's included in the Service Delivery Agreement.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Funding Amount *</b>
Provision of Ribbon Cuttings Service (based on 20-25 events)	\$ 5,000
Provision of Business Excellence Milestone Award (logistics/event planning, preparation of program etc.)	\$15,000
Provision of Ambassador Services at the LINK	\$20,000
Provision of Ambassador Services at De La Salle and special events	\$27,000
	*This includes staff costs to oversee these services

The Chamber has for a number of years requested a multi-year funding agreement that provides certainty of their future funding levels. This service agreement also reduces the amount of time Town Staff spend each year on processing funding requests from the Chamber. Notwithstanding the proposed 5-year Service Agreement, this does not preclude the ability for the Chamber and the Town to continue to research other initiatives that benefit the business community and work on additional joint projects.

### **Georgina Military Museum**

The Military Museum traditionally receives annual funding to cover their operating expenses. The Museum currently runs solely on volunteerism. The new refreshed board as of 2024 has driven a considerable increase in attendance and followers through social media and are working with other similar organizations on multiple collaborations. Additionally, they have increased their outreach to events as far as Orillia and Oshawa.

The current funding for the Military Museum is \$26,550. Staff are recommending a 2026 starting point of \$28,000 and increasing this by 2% per year as an inflationary adjustment and recording the grant on a separate line item. Should the Town consider a corporate model, potentially, one full time staff member would be required to run the organization in the amount of approximately \$80,000 annually, which includes payroll burden. Additionally, under Corporate or 'in house' operations, the Town would be required to review the physical location to ensure that it meets the Town of Georgina Health and Safety Standards. Due to the unique nature of the organization and its assets, operational changes may be required with an unknown cost until a further review is requested. Therefore, it is recommended to continue to provide a grant.

**5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**Delivering service excellence**

**Diversifying the local economy**

**Creating a vibrant, healthy, and safe community for all**

**6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

Based on the staff recommendations to not bring these services in-house at this time, the only budgetary and financial impact relates to separating the three grants from the overall grant program and recording them as separate line items in the 2026 Operating Budget, along with an inflationary increase of 2% thereafter.

The 2025 Grant Program has a total value of \$355,250. After creating separate line items for the three organizations, there will be \$95,250 remaining in 2025 dollars. Staff will recommend increasing the remaining grant program budget to an even \$100,000 as part of the 2026 Budget.

The Service Agreements for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce will include the requirement for the submission of an annual budget for review and approval by the Town's Deputy Treasurer prior to the disbursement of annual funding. A 10% holdback will be implemented and released upon submission of a year-end report detailing how the funds have been allocated together with invoices if deemed necessary.

Although there is no service agreement with the Georgina Military Museum, they will still be subject to the same disbursement requirements as it relates to submitting an annual budget and year-end reporting to the Deputy Treasurer for review.

**7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:**

No public consultation required.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

Based on the information included in this report, staff recommend that the Town continue to support the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, the Georgina Military Museum and the Georgina Chamber of Commerce and that the analysis of in-house vs external service delivery shows that the cost to operate each of the organizations through the Town would exceed the existing arrangement and/or would necessitate additional Town staff resources.

The delegated approval for staff to develop, approve and implement the service agreements for the Georgina Chamber of Commerce and the Centre for Arts and Culture respectively would allow staff to work closely with each of the groups to monitor and support up to date standard KPIs and outcomes in a timely manner.

The delegated authority for staff to develop a 10-year lease agreement for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture will provide greater opportunities for grant submissions.

### **APPROVALS**

Prepared By: Jodi Pridham  
Manager of Client and Cultural Services  
Community Services Department

Prepared By: Karyn Stone  
Manager of Economic Development  
Corporate Services Department

Reviewed By: Steve Lee-Young  
Director, Community Services  
Community Services Department

Reviewed By: Shawn Nastke  
Director, Corporate Services  
Corporate Services Department

Recommended By: Rob Wheeler, CPA, CA  
Deputy CAO/ Treasurer  
Office of the Deputy CAO

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Office of the CAO