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County approves annual subsidy for Dufferin Veteran

County Council has approved a subsidy of $4500 to support one Dufferin Veteran to accompany students from Dufferin High Schools on the annual Battlefield Tour, including the Juno Beach Memorial, in June. The motion was proposed by Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) History teacher, Neil Orford in February to the County General Government Services Committee. It was recommended the motion be presented to County Council on March 12th, where CAO Pam Hillock says it was approved as follows:

?Moved by Councillor Ryan, seconded by Councillor White

THAT the correspondence from Neil Orford, dated February 19, 2015 requesting annual financial assistance towards the Battlefield Tour be received;

AND THAT funding in the amount of $4,500 to subsidize the travel/expenses of a suitable Dufferin Veteran (from any Canadian conflict or peacetime service) to travel with the 2015 Battlefields Tour, be approved;

AND THAT support be given for an ad hoc committee to be formed to work with County staff to establish acceptable criteria or the Application Process and criteria for advertising and recruitment of an acceptable local veteran.?

?This will be an annual subsidy available to any of the three schools who organize Battlefields Tours, based on the CDDHS or Digital History Project models,? says Orford. More importantly,? he continued, ?is the County approval of the creation of an AD Hoc Sub Committee to create criteria for the suitability of candidate veterans.? Currently, Orford is using the criteria previously used for Centre Dufferin District High School Battlefield Tours from 2008?2014.

Under those guidelines, the criteria stipulates, among other things, the candidate must be a Canadian Veteran of a conflict or peacetime service, and/or a serving member of the active forces, able to gain permission to wear a uniform at official functions for the Tour. Candidates must be able to join an itinerary designed for student education, interact with students & give media interviews, and be prepared to act as an official ambassador for all Dufferin Veterans, which includes public speaking on at least four occasions for up to five minutes. They must be able to support their own daily allowance for meals and spending money and be in possession of a valid, up-to-date Canadian Passport.

Orford says he has reached out to the Shelburne Legion, and has contacted a number of veterans locally without luck so far, but adds that ?Darrell Keenie, the General Manager of Dufferin County Museum, is searching for a Veteran, from the Museum perspective.? The real problem for 2015 is that the Tour needs a candidate confirmed for the start of April to guarantee the price, as costs traditionally go up in the spring. ?Next year, we will have the County Ad Hoc Committee in place so that we can do a proper search, but not for this year,? says Orford. More information is available at info@canhist.ca

By Marni Walsh