

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: COMM-2024-01

Date: February 13, 2024

Originator: Greg Kirton, Director of Community Services

Subject: Tradeshow RFP

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council direct staff to enter into a 4-year agreement with Bay Events to provide their services to organize and implement the East Ferris Tradeshow from 2024 to 2027.

BACKGROUND

At the regular meeting of Council on August 8, 2023, Council passed resolution 2023-203, which directed staff to prepare and release an RFP seeking submissions to plan and organize the East Ferris Tradeshow from 2024 onward. The East Ferris Tradeshow has been the premiere business focused event in East Ferris with the 8th annual event running in 2023. The event has shown consistent growth over the years and has evolved to become a family and community focused event while maintaining its business focused roots. The RFP is seeking a 4-year contract with the successful proponent, which will allow consistent and seamless service delivery from year to year.

Staff released an RFP on January 25, 2024, seeking qualified bidders to provide a submission in response. The submission deadline was set for February 7, 2024.

Two submissions were received prior to the deadline:

- 1) Bay Events – Shannon MacCarthy
- 2) Karen Jones Consulting – Karen Jones

Through the RFP document, the proponents were requested to submit a detailed work plan including detailed information on the following items:

- 1) Pricing Breakdown
 - a. Consulting fees to be separated from event fees
 - b. Breakdown of incidental costs and third-party costs for the event
 - c. Assumptions were provided with regards to sponsorship and booth registration to standardize the submission information

- 2) Contractor Scope of Work
 - a. Included a breakdown of the minimum expectations for the event including vendor and sponsorship packages, site set up, promotional materials and expectations and all other elements of past events
 - b. Flexibility was given in this section for the proponent to give detailed information about their own ideas and proposals to improve the event and create more value
- 3) Past Experience

Staff evaluated both proposals in detail based on these primary categories.

Pricing:

Based on a \$35,000.00 project budget, each submission was broken down as follows:

Bay Events

Consulting Fees: \$7,000.00
Event Expenses: \$28,000.00

Karen Jones Consulting

Consulting Fees: \$20,000.00
Event Expenses: \$15,000.00

Pricing is a major consideration when reviewing the RFP and considering the value that can be provided to the event. A lower fee allocated to consulting fees means that there is significant additional funding that can be directed towards attractions and services provided at the event.

Scope of Work:

Bay Events

Bay Events provided an extremely detailed plan for the types of events that they would include in the tradeshow as well as how they would meet the requirements related to event logistics with 16 pages of their proposal being dedicated to their work plan.

Their work plan included numerous ways to engage the public of all ages as secondary elements to the business booths. Their engagement plan was well laid out and broken down into 5 categories, each tailored to different parts of the event and different demographics. The

plans include many tangible ideas that would improve the vendor experience while attending the show as well as ideas to increase the profile of the event for the public attending.

Karen Jones Consulting

Karen Jones Consulting laid out their work plan in a table that detailed all of the deliverables that they would provide and organized it by activity type and work hours dedicated to the project. Their work plan includes all of the detailed steps required to create the promotional materials, vendor and public engagement pieces as well as day of coordination and set up pieces.

The work plan provided by Karen Jones Consulting outlines the roles of each team member and how each of the requirements of the RFP would be fulfilled.

Past Experience:

Bay Events

Bay Events is a newer company that has been operating in the event planning space for approximately a year, with a couple various projects dating back past early 2023. They highlighted their experience with Nipissing University Student Union (NUSU) events that had similar elements to the tradeshow in terms of attendance and scope. Otherwise, they have mostly operated in wedding and event planning during their year of operation.

Karen Jones Consulting

Karen Jones Consulting is very experienced in event planning and has taken on some major projects on a yearly basis, including high profile events like the Royal Winter Fair, as outlined in their RFP submission. Most importantly, they have been the company organizing the East Ferris Tradeshow up until this point and the event has been successful year after year.

Summary:

When evaluating RFP submissions, it is necessary to balance all parts of a proposal and consider what weight should be given to each section. Ultimately the goal of the RFP process is to determine what proposal gives the best value to the municipality for the event while ensuring that we engage a competent consultant who is able to deliver on their plan. Value in terms of the tradeshow event comes primarily in terms of the quality of the event relative to the cost to the municipality.

Although Karen Jones Consulting has significant experience in event planning and specifically with regards to organizing our East Ferris Tradeshow, when weighing all aspects of each proposal, staff are of the opinion that the Bay Events submission would provide a greater value to the municipality. Although Bay Events is a new company with less experience, the experience they do have indicates that they would be capable of organizing the event. Most importantly, the excellent work plan and significantly reduced consulting fees mean that a much higher portion of the event budget could be directed towards improving the experience for the vendors and the public and providing greater overall value for East Ferris.

OPTIONS

1. Option 1

That Council direct staff to enter into a 4-year agreement with Bay Events to provide their services to organize and implement the East Ferris Tradeshow from 2024 to 2027.

2. Option 2

That Council direct staff to enter into a 4-year agreement with Karen Jones Consulting to provide their services to organize and implement the East Ferris Tradeshow from 2024 to 2027.

3. Option 3

That Council do not direct staff to proceed with either submission and not proceed with a tradeshow for 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of moving forward with an agreement would be the commitment to allocating the required funds yearly to support the operation of the tradeshow. Given that booth registrations and sponsorship values fluctuate from year to year, it is not possible to provide an exact total cost to the municipality; however, based on past years' figures, we can assume that total cost to the municipality would be in the range of \$12,500 to \$17,500 per year.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council direct staff to enter into a 4-year agreement with Bay Events to provide their services to organize and implement the East Ferris Tradeshow from 2024 to 2027.

Respectfully Submitted,



Greg Kirton, RPP, MCIP
Director of Community Services

I concur with this report,
and recommendation



Jason H. Trottier, HBBA, CPA, CMA
CAO/Treasurer