



Budget Committee Meeting – January 21, 2026

Subject: Community Events and Projects Support – December 9, 2025
Notice Of Motion
Report Number: CS-26-013
Division: Corporate Services
Department: Finance
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Information

Recommendation(s):

That staff report CS-26-013 in response to the December 9th, 2025 Notice of Motion regarding support for community events and projects be received as information.

Executive Summary:

Purpose of the Report:

To provide a high-level summary of the estimated value of County resources contributed annually to support community events and projects as requested by Council through item number 1 of the December 9th, 2025 notice of motion introduced by Councillor Veri. Item 1 of the motion was carried at the December 16th Council meeting (Resolution No. C-293 per draft minutes), as initially presented.

Background and Context:

At the December 9th Council in Committee meeting, Councillor Veri introduced a notice of motion, subsequently discussed at the December 16th Council meeting, which included a request for information regarding support for community events and projects as follows:

“How much is spent providing services, resources, and utilities for community projects or events? Please include estimates that include the approximate values of staff time (in advance, onsite / during, and after); utilities donated (electricity and water); any professional or technical services contributed; use of county assets (picnic tables, garbage cans, tables and chairs, etc.) vs. rental costs for similar assets; and any other in-kind support. Please highlight examples of the highest investments (specific events or projects), or service costs.”

Key Findings and Analysis:

Staff completed a high-level review of approved 2025 levy budget allocations and operating results, using the 60 special event permits issued by the County for context, as well as Council approved community led projects that were completed during the year, in an attempt to quantify the value of resources contributed directly or in-kind to support various community initiatives.

Attachment A provides a list of permitted events in 2025 by location. **Table 1** below provides a summary of support by contribution type, and **Table 2** provides a summary of the top contributions by event.

Summarized in **Table 3** below are contributions associated with approved community projects which were completed or are substantially complete at 2025 year-end.

Conclusions:

This review has revealed gaps in current processes for tracking special event costs. While data quality challenges exist, staff are confident that the information presented is reasonably supported. The cost summary should be interpreted as an indication of how effectively expenses for specific events are being tracked, rather than as a precise accounting of the County's total support costs.

Financial Implications:

Staff's high-level analysis estimates that the County provides at least \$300,000 annually to support community events and projects, which represents approximately 0.2% of the approved 2025 levy budget. As detailed in this report, system constraints and the historically low priority placed on event-level cost tracking mean that precise figures are not available. To address some of these gaps, staff have supplemented existing financial data with management estimates to present Council with the most reasonable summary possible, while acknowledging these limitations.

Discussions:

The notice of motion introduced by Councillor Veri at the December 9th Council-in-Committee meeting included direction to staff to provide a summary of the estimated value of resources contributed by the County to support community events and projects.

Specifically, the motion asks to include estimates representing the values of **staff time**, **utilities donated**, any **professional or technical services** contributed, total **cash-contribution / grant / financial subsidy** provided, and **in-kind use of County assets** (i.e. picnic tables, garbage cans, table and chairs, etc.) based on equivalent rental costs, and to highlight examples of the highest investments by event or service.

As a point of reference, the County uses a formal special event permitting process which issued approximately 64 permits for outdoor special events in 2025. The established permit review process includes circulation to staff representing 13 County departments, as well as external Grand Erie Public Health, and Norfolk County OPP organizations. This ensures that any concerns related to public safety, emergency planning, or permitted land use can be addressed prior to the event and also identifies any additional licenses that may be required (i.e. AGCO, paid duty O.P.P. officers, etc.). If an event requires a request for a road closure, a report is drafted by Corporate Services staff and brought to Council for approval which also serves as public notice.

It should be noted that while any costs related to paid duty O.P.P. officers are borne by event organizers, costs related to EMS support for *public* events are borne by the County. EMS support costs for *private* events are recovered via paid duty charges at the approved user fee rate, which was \$218 per hour in 2025, for one ambulance and crew (minimum 4 hours; maximum 12 hours). EMS special event support costs totaled approximately \$14,200 in 2025 but average around \$21,000 historically. These costs are included in the overall totals provided below.

Since 2021 the County has charged a permit application fee intended to recover administrative costs associated with the permit review process which in 2025 was \$360 for large events (>1,000 attendees), and \$122 for smaller events (<1,000 attendees). This fee was recommended to be consolidated into one fee at a rate of \$150 for all special event permits for 2026 based on current processes and resource requirements. Special event permits generated revenue of approximately \$10,000 in 2025. This revenue is included in the net annual cost calculation provided.

Data Limitations and Approach

The County uses an activity-based budgeting approach which focuses on more broad operational activities, programs, and physical facilities to organize budget allocations and monitor operations, with consideration given to internal and external reporting requirements. As such, staff currently do not track costs related to specific events and therefore we must rely on estimates provided by management to satisfy this request given the relative time constraint. Should Council require ongoing reporting of this nature, staff could look to utilize tools available within the current financial system to provide more accurate information going forward. It is worth noting that this approach would require commitment from management and staff to track this activity consistently and may increase administrative burden to some degree.

Many outdoor special events require direct or in-kind contributions from the County's Parks and Roads Departments to ensure the site is ready for use, to facilitate road closures, install and remove road barriers, and facilitate cleanup and garbage disposal after completion, among many other activities. Additionally, the County incurs costs related to operating supplies as well as costs to maintain equipment and infrastructure used to carry out community events. This analysis attempts to identify costs that can be directly attributed to specific events based on transaction information and account

usage, and supplement with estimates provided by management where data is incomplete or is not representative.

Historically, the County has tracked costs related to Port Dover Friday the 13th events more closely given previous reporting requirements and level of involvement across the County. Support requirements are outlined in more detail below.

It is important to note that the summary information provided is not intended to be comprehensive, and these estimates may not align with the perceived contributions provided by the County. The objective is to provide a reasonable representation of the County's contributions that can be supported by the underlying data available under the circumstances. The values provided should be viewed more as a reflection of the degree to which staff are currently tracking expenses related to specific events, and not a true accounting of County support costs.

Analysis and Summary

Table 1 below provides a summary of total estimated contributions in 2025 by contribution type highlighting the events requiring the most significant resources. The top 5 contributions by event are highlighted in **Table 2**, followed by a more in-depth discussion on the level of support provided by these main contributors.

As mentioned, due to system limitations, the majority of these costs could not be allocated directly to specific events but can be reasonably categorized by expense type. Additional commentary has been provided for context.

It should also be noted that the County incurs costs annually related to general planning and emergency preparedness, which also relates to public event support. This includes items like planning meetings, training and development for staff, IT and infrastructure maintenance, including backup generator and communications equipment testing and maintenance. These costs have not been included in the summary tables below but represent corporate costs that are incurred annually that help ensure, in part, public safety and efficiency of community events.

Table 1: Summary by Contribution Type

Contribution Type	Estimated Value (\$)	Top Contributors
Staff time	173,800	\$33,400 Friday the 13 th \$3,500 Waterford Lions Pumpkinfest \$3,400 PD Lions Canada Day \$3,200 Simcoe Friendship Festival * Largely unallocated due to system limitations
Operating Supplies	24,100	\$12,200 Friday the 13 th \$1,900 Simcoe Panorama \$9,800 Unallocated
Portable Toilet Rentals	18,600	Friday the 13 th
Janitorial Services (Mobile Washrooms)	14,600	Various
Fleet Vehicles and Equipment (in-kind)	13,800	Various
Signage	9,800	\$2,300 Friday the 13 th \$7,500 Unallocated
Meals – Emergency Services	9,700	Primarily Friday the 13 th
Security and Communications	8,500	Primarily Friday the 13 th
Repairs and Maintenance	5,800	Primarily Mobile Washroom Trailer
Garbage Disposal	5,200	\$1,500 Friday the 13 th (approx.) \$200-\$300 per major event
Utilities donated (hydro, water)	3,000	\$900 Panorama (incremental) \$300 for major events (approx.)

Donations and Recoveries (i.e. Special Event Fees)	(10,000)	All special event permit revenue
Other	3,100	Various
Total Estimated Community Event Support - 2025	280,000	

Notes and comments:

Staff time

Parks, Roads, Fire, and Paramedic Services Departments contribute the majority of staffing resources to support community events. Management estimate that a typical road closure requires two Roads staff members approximately two hours to complete, often at overtime rates if setup or takedown occurs on a weekend. County fleet vehicle and equipment usage costs are estimated and applied using internal rates and are included in that category as in-kind contributions. Top contributors are as follows:

- \$94,000 – Parks, Recreation and Culture
- \$46,300 – Roads Department
- \$23,800 – Fire Department
- \$9,700 - Paramedic Services
- **Average 2016-2025: \$218,100**

Operating Supplies

Various departments require operating and maintenance/repair supplies to perform various tasks related directly to special event support. Most of these items cannot be attributed directly to specific events but can be identified accordingly and attributed to specific operating areas. The following areas contribute the most operating supplies to events:

- \$10,800 – Parks, Recreation and Culture
- \$7,800 – Fire Department
- \$4,400 – Paramedic Services
- \$1,000 – Roads Department
- **Average 2016-2025: \$20,800**

Portable Toilet Rentals

The County spent approximately \$114,500 in 2025 on portable toilet rentals to provide access for staff, residents, and visitors to various Parks, Marinas, and remote Roads facilities in the normal course of business. These costs have not been allocated to special events, although some of these may be utilized if an event is held in the vicinity. Additionally, the County supplies portable toilet rentals for Friday the 13th events which

can see an influx of more than 100,000 people. The County spent approximately \$18,600 on portable toilet rentals for the June event in 2025. The County also budgets approximately \$5,600 for portable toilet rentals for other events as needed, including the Simcoe Christmas Panorama, however, this budget doesn't appear to have been utilized in 2025 to a great extent, with costs mainly attributable to the Friday the 13th event. Event organizers may also supply their own portable toilet rentals for events as necessary. Rates vary depending on the configuration, but rentals range from \$150-\$200 per unit plus \$75 per unit for service.

Janitorial Services – Mobile Washroom Trailer

The County supplies a mobile washroom trailer to various community events including the events listed as the top 5 contributors, however, costs cannot be directly allocated based on the information available. The largest maintenance cost for this facility is janitorial services which totaled \$14,600 in 2025. Total operating costs for the trailer were \$21,600 in 2025. The current service contract costs the County approximately \$2,100 per month.

Fleet Vehicle and Equipment Rentals

Norfolk County staff utilizing fleet vehicles to facilitate special event setup and takedown, litter barrel cleaning, etc. have been valued as in-kind contributions at internal usage rates. These County assets exist primarily to support normal operations and therefore are deemed to be in-kind contributions when used to support public events.

Signage

Different events require various temporary or permanent signage, and County staff maintain, install, and remove these as needed. \$2,300 was attributable to the Friday the 13th event in 2025 with \$7,500 unallocated.

Meals – Emergency Services

This item primarily applies to Friday the 13th events which require a large contingent of Fire and EMS staff on site for a long period of time which requires significant food, water and meals for staff.

Security and Communications

Norfolk County Fire Department is responsible for establishing and maintaining systems to allow emergency services to monitor Friday the 13th events to ensure public safety and manage risks associated with an event of this size. This may include CCTV cameras, drones, and communication signal repeaters, etc. Since 2019, annual costs have averaged approximately \$8,500.

Repairs and Maintenance

Most maintenance and repair costs highlighted in this category in 2025 are related to the mobile washroom trailer which is deployed to various public events across the County in support of community events.

Garbage Disposal

Current rates are roughly \$325 per pickup but can vary depending on certain factors, therefore assumed approximately \$300 on average for larger events, with Friday the 13th accounting for the largest additional disposal requirements due to the size of the event and multiple pickup locations. This would only apply to an event generating additional waste requiring an out of schedule pickup.

Utilities Donated (Hydro and Water)

Staff reviewed incremental hydro increases at various locations on dates major events were held versus normal average consumption and attributed the value of these increases to certain events. Not surprisingly, the Simcoe Christmas Panorama contributes the highest amount of hydro utility as it runs for a whole month with significant energy requirements for the evening hours. The overall increase was approximately \$900-\$1,000 in 2025. Impacts related to most other events are difficult to assess with only marginal increases but assumed \$200-\$300 for major community-wide events using various County parks amenities.

Donations and Recoveries

Activity varies, and the County has received the occasional donation in previous years in support of different events, however, this total mainly consists of special event fees collected which help offset some of the costs incurred by the County.

Table 2: Top 5 Contributions by Event

Event Name	Estimated Value (\$)
Friday the 13 th	86,300
Port Dover Lions Canada Day Celebration	4,300
Simcoe Heritage Friendship Festival	3,800
Waterford Lions Pumpkinfest	3,700
Simcoe Christmas Panorama	3,700
All Others*	178,200
Total	280,000

* Average of \$3,000 for each of the remaining 60 events, which seems reasonable.

Unsurprisingly, Friday the 13th events account for the majority of special event resources contributed by the County due to the size of favourable weather events occurring between May and September and the significant involvement of Fire and EMS departments. Signature events from the larger Norfolk communities represent the next highest contributors which is also expected. Please note that these costs are likely much higher, but staff have presented conservative estimates that can be reasonably supported by actual data and known contributions.

Friday the 13 Events (May-September)

The Norfolk County Fire Department plays a critical role in ensuring the safe and efficient delivery of Friday the 13th events in Port Dover. Their contributions span comprehensive event planning, including developing operational plans, risk management strategies, and emergency response protocols tailored to event-specific hazards. They establish and staff a dedicated command post, manage communications systems, and coordinate apparatus deployment to maintain situational awareness and rapid response capabilities.

The department also conducts fire prevention inspections for vendors and beer tents, liaises with allied agencies and community organizations, and oversees technology such as drones and cameras for real-time monitoring. Additionally, they support crisis communications, maintain municipality-wide emergency coverage, and implement training exercises to prepare crews for event-specific challenges. These efforts collectively ensure public safety, operational continuity, and effective inter-agency coordination throughout the event period. For this exercise, primarily staff time and related costs (meals, fleet vehicles and equipment) for emergency services workers, as well as operating supplies, signage, and communications equipment are represented in this analysis. General corporate planning and preparedness costs are excluded.

Norfolk County Paramedic Services also contributes up to four full ambulance crews and run a medical clinic with a hired physician for larger Friday the 13th events. These costs are included in the totals presented in **Tables 1 and 2**.

Community Led Projects

In addition to community event support, the County also provides ongoing operational support related to various Council approved community led projects. This is usually in the form of maintenance of a structure or asset which was initially funded all or in part by a community group. The County is generally responsible for the asset management requirements associated with the contributed asset. **Table 3** provides a summary of approved projects that were at or near completion in 2025.

Table 3: Community Projects Summary

Project Name	Capital – Community (\$)	Capital – County (\$)	Annual Operating (\$)	Annual Life Cycle (\$)	Total Annual County Cost (\$)	Construction Management
Turkey Point playground expansion	32,000	4,000	1,000	2,700	3,700	County
Turkey Point pickleball courts	57,000	120,000	7,000	18,200	25,200	County
Port Rowan Becker Puller pavilion	87,000	0	1,000	3,500	4,500	Community
Total	176,000	124,000	9,000	24,400	33,400	

Finance Comments:

Staff have conducted a high-level review of County contributions toward community events and projects, estimating annual support of at least \$300,000, which is roughly 0.2% of the approved 2025 levy budget. It is important to note that this figure is not based on detailed event-level accounting. Due to system constraints and the historically limited focus on tracking these costs, staff relied on available financial data supplemented by management estimates to provide Council with the most reasonable summary possible. Should Council wish to receive annual reporting on special event expenditures, staff will establish procedures to ensure accurate and consistent tracking going forward.

Using this same methodology, average annual spending on special event support between 2015 and 2025 was approximately \$287,000, excluding community-led projects, which were only recently formalized.

Interdepartmental Implications:

Finance staff collaborated with staff and management representing various County departments, including Parks, Recreation and Culture, Roads, Facilities, Accessibility and Customer Experience, as well as SLT to contribute and validate the information presented.

Consultation(s):

Internal collaboration only.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

Empowering Norfolk - Putting the tools and resources in place to ensure our businesses' and residents' success

Explanation: This report enhances the County's understanding of the resources required to sustain community events and projects, ensuring that residents and businesses have the tools, support, and capacity they need to thrive.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment A – Special Event Listing

Approval:

Approved By:
Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed By:
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Chris Everets, CPA, Manager, Financial Planning

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