

Dear City Council,

Together we write this letter to acknowledge and support the motion put forward by Councillor Caron. Councillor Caron is seeking additional funding for local organizations from the Federal and Provincial governments and by having staff identify possible existing funding sources to support local non-profits and charities.

This pandemic has changed the world as we knew it. Non-profit sports organizations have been largely non-operational for many months. Some of us have a significant amount of expenses invested in a season that didn't take place or that was cut short, some of us have staff that we've had to lay off or let go entirely, some of us have shut down and are waiting to start back up when it's safe to do so. The absence of youth sport participation will have a negative impact on our youth's social and mental wellbeing. We know we need to get our players back to the sports they love and our concern is related to the large cost to safely return to play. Some of the return to play requirements include contact tracing, keeping group sizes small, and the purchase of personal protective equipment. Expenses keep growing while revenue is stagnant or declining. We are concerned that without the support from the City of Guelph we will need to raise fees making our programs less and less affordable for Guelph residents. All of us believe that every child should have access to youth sports and together we can take action to make sure this remains possible.

The benefits of youth participating in sport are far reaching. Sport, when grounded in fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun - can strengthen belonging to each other and to our communities. Part of the investment needed in the next steps of our economic recovery needs to include further access to grants for local organizations, including non-profit youth sports organizations.

We urge council to support the motion to request city staff for expanded funding for the community well being grant and that the criteria would allow access to all organizations including non-profit sports organizations. Although we recognize that the third part of this motion requests only information at this time, we see great value in providing additional financial supports to all community groups inclusive of non-profit youth sports organizations in the 2021 budget.

Sincerely,

Sara Orrell, General Manager, **Guelph Soccer**
Alan Arneill, President, **Stanley Stick Hockey Association**
Jeffrey Hoffman, President, **Guelph Minor Baseball Association**
Tricia Chilton, President, **Guelph Minor Lacrosse**
Mary Gerrard, General Manager, **Guelph Marlins Aquatic Club**
Leanne Claerbout, President, **Guelph Ringette**