

HMRRC Grant Program Expansion

March 10, 2008

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The existing HMRRC grant program budgets \$10,000 per year for the purpose of awarding grants of up to \$1,000 to "qualifying organizations that advance running within the capital district". The purpose of these grants is to encourage and support additional running-related opportunities for HMRRC members and for runners in general.

The current program is intended to benefit running-related organizations such as clubs, races, and umbrella organizations established to advance road running and racing. Qualifying organizations must have no restrictions on membership or participation to be eligible.

This proposal to expand the HMRRC Grant Program would:

- Retain the existing program as is.
- Create a new program focused on supporting community- or school-based youth programs.
- Establish a "special purpose" category of grants in which the club pro-actively pursues appropriate uses for its surplus.

Grant Program Expansion Option 1: Youth Development Program Grants

The existing HMRRC grant program has, over its two and a half year existence, received multiple applications from community- or school-based groups seeking funds to support youth-based running programs. Generally, these applications have been turned down on the basis that the programs do not benefit runners in general (one of the criteria for awarding grants in the original program).

A special Youth Program category for the HMRRC Grant program would:

- Address a national concern with youth fitness
- Help satisfy HMRRC's educational mission
- Recognize an existing community need for funding (as reflected by existing grant requests from youth-focused organizations)

The Youth Program might initially be set up to function in a manner similar to the existing grant program. Youth programs would submit grant applications for up to \$1,000 to the HMRRC Grant Committee, which would then award grants based on the committee's assessment of the youth program's ability to meet its objectives. By working with existing youth programs, the HMRRC Youth Development Initiative could be quickly implemented. Special emphasis should be placed on promoting the program to schools and community organizations.

Longer term, HMRRC might consider supplying support in addition to money for such programs. Such supplementary support might include:

- A how-to manual for school and community organizations outlining what goes into organizing and administering a successful youth program.
- Model training programs for participants.
- Youth-program tee shirts for program participants.
- Special events (or event categories) for program participants to participate in at the conclusion of their training regimen. For example, the club might add a special category to its Father's Day event for program participants. Such a category, however, should focus on the participant's meeting a personal goal (e.g., target time, PR) rather than winning against other participants.

Because such supplementary support will take volunteer time as well as money to implement, the

club may want to defer such support to a "phase two" initiative.

Youth Organization Grant Program Pros

- Easy to get under way if modeled after existing grant program.
- Satisfies HMRRRC's educational purpose.

Youth Organization Grant Program Cons

- Youth programs can vary widely in terms of quality. HMRRRC has no easy way to confirm a program's integrity or effectiveness (although many of the sponsoring organizations are recognizable and provide some level of assurance).

Grant Program Expansion Option 2: Special Purpose Grants

Grant awards made by HMRRRC are currently reactive. We make grants after receiving grant applications. However, in the course of reviewing appropriate uses for the club's surplus, we have become aware of a number of possible uses for which no grant request has been received (or might be approved, given our current standards). The club may want to consider a grant category for special projects and charge the grant committee with pro-actively identifying appropriate projects for consideration.

Three such projects have been suggested as possibilities (and are mentioned here only as illustrations, not as recommendations):

- *Pinebush Preserve Grant* for the purpose of ascertaining whether running within the Pinebush causes any negative environmental impact and, if it does, whether ameliorative steps could be taken. Less grandly, a grant to the Preserve might be an appropriate trade-off for increase use of the Preserve by runners and running organizations.
- *D&H Rail Trail Grant.*—The proposed trail runs between Albany and Voorheesville along an old D&H rail line. Ray Newkirk has contacted the organization spear-heading the initiative (see Appendix A) for additional information. A grant could be used to help fund the organization trying to secure development of this proposed trail.
- *Corning Preserve bikepath.*— Remeasuring the ½ mile markers (as some seem to be off) and putting in some more permanent/secure markers (I was thinking of something like laying bricks or paving stones with the mile mark imprinted in them a crossed the path). With this, extend the mile markers south along the river toward the USS Salter and putting in a 4.5 mile marker at the northern end (even if it is on the path heading to the cultural park) Maybe also placing a 5k marker for people. Also for the first mile maybe place 1/4 and 3/4 markers for people who are looking for some speed work. Other thoughts I have are possibly putting in a water fountain or two and some call boxes.

The procedures for such Special Purpose Grants would be different than the club's other grant programs:

- The club would budget an amount for Special Purpose Grants (e.g., \$10,000).
- The long-range planning committee would make 1-2 recommendations for such grants. (The grants, in short, would be larger than the maximum \$1,000 grants currently awarded.) The committee would be expected to use its own initiative to identify grant candidates (although, of course, requests would be given consideration, as well).
- The special purpose grant recommendations would be proposed at a specified club meeting and voted upon at a subsequent meeting. In short, the club as a whole would approve the committee's recommendation(s).

This approach is intended to give the club's membership an opportunity to participate in the process of awarding significant grants.

Grant Program Expansion Financial Summary

The club would determine as part of its annual budgetary process how much money should be allocated to each of the grant program's components.

Grant Category	Budget Amount	Comment
General	\$10,000	Continue current program
Youth Program Grants	\$10,000	
Youth Program Support	\$5,000	Used for publicity and support materials. Might be deferred until a phase 2 while materials are being developed.
Special Purpose	\$10,000	

Implementation

1. Long-range planning makes a recommendation to the club to commit up to \$25,000 per year to expand the grant program along the lines outlined in our document.
2. The club approves the expanded grant proposal.
3. The grant committee (currently, Newkirk, Neiles, Davey, Peterson) works out the details of the youth grant program. The proposal greatly expands the work of the grant committee, so we may need to secure the commitment of the existing members to doing more work. In my opinion, smaller committees are better, so I'd be reluctant to increase this committee's size by more than one.
4. The long-range planning committee assumes the responsibility for making special purpose grant recommendations.

