

A Word About Grants

Recent conversations about grants have lead me to want to share some information about grants that have been awarded to the City of Washburn. Did you know that since 2009, the City of Washburn has been the recipient of over \$5,000,000 in grant dollars? These grants have come in all sorts of dollar amounts and requirements. The largest grant during this period was \$1,299,000 for the Coal Dock Rehabilitation Project, and the smallest has been \$1,000 for park/playground improvements. There have been grants that we have applied for that we did not receive, and there have been grants that we have declined for various reasons. Grant applications can be as simple as writing a very short letter to as complex as a 40 page application requiring various permits to be in place, obtaining letter of support, and giving a formal presentation in front of a board. Applications have been completed by volunteers contributing their own time on our behalf, paid consultants, and City staff. In most cases, it requires a group of people working together to complete an application. The follow-up and reporting requirements of grants also vary widely. Some are very simple, we just say “thank you” and others are very time consuming with quarterly reports required, copies of all payments made to a project, photographs of work done, etc. For the complex grants, it again takes a group of people working together to complete those tasks. Funds have come from the federal, state, and local level of government as well as foundations and private businesses. All of the grants are for equipment, programs to provide funds to the public, or capital projects such as roads, docks, and improvements to buildings, parks, etc. Many grants require matching funds of other City dollars, and these grants must be carefully planned. None of the grants cover operating costs of the City. This last point is important because as our operating budget gets tighter each year, the risk of not maintaining staffing increases. The City would be in a lot worse shape if it were not for all of these grants to help supplement our budget to accomplish improvements. I thank all of those who have helped write or work on grant applications and complete the reporting requirements. I also thank all of those that are responsible for providing the funds to the City as well. Know that our small staff works hard to make these applications possible and to keep the City in good graces with the provider. The more time our staff can allocate to projects that benefit the City, the more the City can benefit as a whole.

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