



The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie

COUNCIL REPORT

October 14, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Nicole Maione, Director of Community Services
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Watch Tower Convention Agreement 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enter into an agreement with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada (Watch Tower) to host their annual convention at the GFL Memorial Gardens in 2026.

Background

The Watch Tower Convention has been held at the GFL Memorial Gardens seven times over the past ten years. The event brings approximately 2,500 individuals to the Community annually and provides an estimated economic impact of \$892,500 to the city.

Analysis

The City of Sault Ste. Marie was approached by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada to host the 2026 convention, citing the continued success of previous conventions held at the GFL Memorial Gardens and strong relationships that have developed between the convention organizers, City staff, and the welcoming local community.

As part of the process, Watch Tower has requested that we utilize their agreement as opposed to the standard use agreement for a City facility. The City's Legal Department has vetted the document and supports what has been presented for use. The agreement can be found elsewhere on the Agenda.

The event will run from Thursday July 2, 2026, to Sunday July 5, 2026.

Financial Implications

Operating revenues from facility rental are estimated at \$12,100 plus HST will be positively impacted by hosting this event.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

The recommendation supports the Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2027 in a number of ways:

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- Under the Community Development focus area this event will support economic activity.
- In addition, within the Quality of Life this event supports a welcoming community and a vibrant downtown.
- This event also supports the focus area of Infrastructure, and it assists in maintaining current infrastructure.
- Finally, it continues to assist in delivering excellent customer service under the Service Delivery focus area.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

The relevant by-law 2025-151 and agreement is listed under item 12 of the Agenda and will be read with all by-laws under that item.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Maione
Director of Community Services
Community Development and Enterprise
Services
705.759.5264
n.maione@cityssm.on.ca