

Crystal Lake gives hotel tax funds to nonprofits

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Local

CRYSTAL LAKE – The Crystal Lake City Council distributed nearly \$300,000 in hotel tax revenue to local **nonprofit** groups. City officials expect to bring in about \$270,000 in revenue from the hotel and motel tax this year, and the City Council decided to use reserve **funds** to help out as many groups as possible.

At a workshop in January, organizations presented the City Council with requests totaling \$446,500. Council members narrowed down that list and voted to disperse money at a meeting Tuesday night.

The bulk of the money – \$150,000 – was awarded to the Raue Center for the Arts. The center will use the money for marketing and programming support, Executive Director Richard Kuranda said.

“We’re thrilled to get such great support from the city,” he said. “We plan to steward those dollars wisely.”

The Raue Center also asked for \$44,000 for building maintenance and repair, but the council turned down that request.

Mayor Aaron Shepley said the city would study other ways to assist in those efforts.

“The Council feels strongly about what the Raue brings to the city,” Shepley said. “That is why we have elected every year to give more than 50 percent of the money available to the center.”

The other major benefactor was McHenry County Youth Sports Association, which received \$50,000. The Council awarded \$35,000 to the Historic Downtown District and \$25,000 to the Lakeside Legacy Foundation. Another \$15,000 went to the city’s Independence Day fireworks display and \$10,000 was set aside for the Crystal Lake Chamber of the Commerce Independence Day Parade.

Councilors agreed to use about \$25,000 from the \$78,000 in hotel and motel tax **fund** reserves to cover the spending. The money, which had been left over from previous years, was meant for difficult times, which all agreed applied this year.

Smaller grants were given to the Crystal Lake Babe Ruth League, Crystal Lake Rowing Club, and McHenry County Music Center.

The **City Council** did not award any money **to** the McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau but plans **to** discuss paying \$12,000 **to** join the promotional organization. Shepley said money from the **city's** operations **fund** could be used **to** join the bureau if the council should vote **to** do so.

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