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To: Mayor Kudron and the Grand Lake Board of Trustees
From: John Crone, Town Manager
Re: Institution of a Recognition Bench Program
Date: September 25, 2023

Background

The Town used to operate a program where people could purchase a memorial bench in recognition of deceased individuals for approximately \$350. The people could choose their message and the location for the bench. In 2020, the Town suspended this program because of first amendment concerns and maintenance concerns.

The Town could not regulate the message chosen for the bench. If someone wanted to, they could say whatever they wanted on the plaques. The Town was also concerned with the maintenance obligation assumed by the Town when accepting these benches. The cost only covered the purchase of one bench. When the benches wore out or were damaged, the responsibility for replacing or repairing the bench fell solely on the Town. Many of the people who purchased the memorial benches would become very upset if a bench was moved or removed for repairs.

Staff has identified an opportunity for the Town to continue with a “Recognition Bench” program. The program would allow the Town Board to pick recipients for a Recognition Bench. That thought is that this would allow the Board to show appreciation to those people who have shown a deep commitment to the Town. By allowing the Board to choose the recipients, there would not be any concerns with First Amendment issues. Since the Town would be paying for the benches and selecting their locations, it would also alleviate any issues when the Town needs to remove the benches for repair or relocate them to a new location.

At this time, staff is only looking for approval to institute the program. It is anticipated that the Board will designate the first recipients at a future meeting.

Proposed Motion

If the Board wishes proceed with a Recognition Bench Program, it may do so by adopting one of the following motions:

I move to instruct the Town Manager to implement a Recognition Bench Program.