

REPORT

Fire & Rescue Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council in Regular Meeting
Date: January 9, 2023

From: Erin Williams
Acting Fire Chief
File:

Item #: 2023-5

Subject: Funding Submission to the Provincial Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for Emergency Support Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council approve the funding submission to the Provincial Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Support Services for up to \$20,000 to upgrade and implement a digital reporting and registration; and

THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and the Fire Chief be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the Province of British Columbia.

PURPOSE

Staff are seeking support to submit a grant application to the Province of British Columbia under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund – Emergency Support Services requesting up to \$20,000. Staff are seeking official authorization from Council to enter into a contract with the Provincial Government for the proposed project and a willingness to provide overall grant support.

SUMMARY

Staff are submitting a grant application requesting \$20,000 to the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) for the following project:

New Westminster is intending to purchase computer equipment and supplies to support the Emergency Management BC's (EMBC) modernization, allowing the city access to the new Provincial Evacuee Registration & Assistance tool (ERA). The equipment would

permit the city to move to an online/virtual service platform to assist the Emergency Management team in providing coordinated resources and support and care to those forced to evacuate.

BACKGROUND

New Westminster's Emergency Management Office supports Emergency Support Services (ESS) volunteers in the primary response role for emergency events, where residents are displaced within the community. By using the created online tool for ESS, procedures will immediately increase and enhance our response capacity in the delivery of Registrations and Referrals after an event/disaster.

Community Emergency Preparedness Fund

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding streams intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments, First Nations and communities in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

All local governments and First Nations in BC are eligible to apply. The Province of BC will pay up to 100% of eligible costs. Each eligible applicant can submit one application per funding stream per call for projects.

The CEPF funding streams are:

- 2023 FireSmart Community Funding and Supports
- 2023 Emergency Support Services
- 2022/23 Disaster Risk Reduction
- 2023 Emergency Operations Centres Training

The intent of this funding stream is to support eligible applicants to build local capacity to provide emergency support services through ESS volunteer/responder recruitment, retention and training, and the purchase of ESS equipment. The maximum eligible funding is \$25,000.

The focus of the ESS funding stream for the 2023 intake continues to be support of the modernization of local ESS programs in order to move toward digital registration and reporting through the Evacuee Registration & Assistance (ERA) Tool. Additionally, the intake will focus on promoting knowledge sharing, enhancing mutual aid, and for applicants to act as host communities.

At the current intake, the City is requesting to apply for the Emergency Support Services Stream.

EXISTING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Currently ESS procedures and response tools are produced through a paper based system. The ERA tool would be implemented to replace the paper based system, enabling immediate and secure input of data, into the EMBC government system, reducing all processing times and support efforts of zero waste.

New Westminster is one of the last communities to onboard this update. Referrals would have enhanced security and be provided in a more timely manner. Portability of the new equipment will increase ease of set up at our event locations and serve more areas of the community by facilitating easy, virtual support when needed.

ANALYSIS

The requested equipment will improve the service to the community during an emergency event. A practiced, efficient registration process will reduce wait times. The referrals are simplified and the completed information is secure and standard, reducing errors. More evacuees can be supported in a more timely manner, face to face or remotely.

The new equipment can be utilized from anywhere within the community, supporting and preserving the well-being of those impacted, quickly and more effectively. The ability to link with other first responders and partners, provide immediate reports on resources/statistics and to expedite the reimbursement of suppliers will all increase the emergency response efficiency and capacity

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City is intending to request a total of \$20,000 from the Province of BC to modernize the Emergency Support Services Program in New Westminster. This is 100% of the resources required for this phase of equipment upgrade.

Should the submission be successful, the City would be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Province of BC. The agreement is a standard form agreement provided by the Provincial Government and include an indemnity and release in favour of the Provincial Government.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. Approve the grant submission in the amount of \$20,000 to the Provincial Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for Evacuation Route Planning.; or
2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION

Based on the funding available through the Provincial Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Support Services , staff are requesting approval to submit the grant application for \$20,000. Staff are also requesting permission to enter into a contract with the Provincial Government, if the application is successful.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Cory Hansen, Emergency Management Coordinator

This report was reviewed by:
Brad Davie, Assistant Deputy Chief
Denise A Tambellini Manager Intergovernmental Relations

This report was approved by:
Erin Williams, Acting Fire Chief
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer