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Item No. 3
Grants Committee
September 10, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Grants Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Chief Kenneth Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Services

Original Signed

John Traves, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 16, 2018

SUBJECT: **Volunteer Search and Rescue Grants Program: Recommended Awards
Fiscal Year 2018-2019**

ORIGIN

February 3, 2015 – Council approval of Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue Organizations.

March 31, 2018 – Application deadline for the 2018-19 program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (“HRM Charter”) S.N.S 2008, c.39

s.79 (1) Council may expend money required by the Municipality for

...
(av) a grant or contribution to

...
(v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province;

...
(vii) a registered Canadian charitable organization.

Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search and Rescue Organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend Regional Council:

1. approve the award of four (4) Operating Grants as described in the Discussion section of this report for a combined total of \$134,000 from Account C801-8004;
2. approve the award of two (2) Capital Grants as described in the Discussion section of this report for a combined total of \$7,274 from Account C801-8004; and
3. direct the CAO to conduct an evaluation of the Volunteer Search and Rescue Grants Program and submit a report to the HRM Grants Committee.

BACKGROUND

Volunteer search and rescue teams provide assistance to all three levels of government in the event of a missing person search, an evacuation, natural or man-made disaster, or evidence search. Although the four (4) organizations formally recognized by HRM are based in predominantly rural locations their search areas cover the entire region and on occasion more than one unit may be called upon to provide volunteer personnel and equipment. Through Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM, HRM provides operating and capital grants to support such organizations.

DISCUSSION

I. Proposed Awards

(i) Operating Grants

Operating grants are based on an average of three years of core recurring operating expenses and exclude search call-out claims that are reimbursed by the agent of jurisdiction. The value of the recommended operating grant is based on the average of the preceding three (3) year actuals as presented in the applicant's financial reporting.

Table 1. Proposed Operating Grants – 2018		
Organization	Proposed Award	Status
Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$33,500	Registered charity, property owner
Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	\$57,000	Registered charity, property owner
Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$17,000	Registered Society. Occupant of HRM Owned Property
Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue	\$26,500	Registered Society.
TOTAL	\$134,000	

(ii) Capital Grants

Capital grants support the purchase of real property; substantive structural repairs or expansion of a facility or infrastructure owned by the non-profit; the purchase of specialized equipment exceeding \$500 per item. Capital grants are based on an evaluation of merit and in relation to the balance remaining in the program's

budget after proposed operating grants are deducted. The scoring criteria for capital grants is included as Attachment 1 of this report. In 2018, three (3) capital grant applications were submitted for a combined total of \$44,973. Staff recommend the application from the Sheet Harbour Ground Search and Rescue be declined for the reasons set out in Attachment 2 of this report.

Halifax Regional Search and Rescue Team (HRSAR) – Lakeview – Project Grant/Equipment

In 2018, HRSAR completed a safety audit of their facility. The audit indicated a need to upgrade safety lighting, ensure all fire extinguishers were current and met requirements, and upgrade the facility's alarm system including the addition of smoke alarms throughout the facility. HRSAR completed the safety lighting and fire extinguisher requirements and are requesting a grant in the amount of \$2,274.40 to fully fund upgrades to the facility's security alarm system (quotes provided). ***A capital grant in the amount of \$2,274 to the Halifax Regional Search and Rescue Team is recommended to fully fund the purchase and installation of security alarm system upgrades.***

Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team (MVGSAR) – Middle Musquodoboit- Capital Grant/Equipment

MVGSAR is incorporated in Nova Scotia as a non-profit society. This group recently purchased a new mobile command base that requires an antenna mast (*Hilo Mast NH9*) in order for the base to function in remote areas. A capital grant of \$5,000 requested towards the purchase and installation of a new antenna (total cost \$6,500) Cost-share confirmed. ***A capital grant in the amount of \$5,000 to the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team is recommended towards the cost of purchasing a communications antenna for mobile command base.***

II. Joint Emergency Measures Teams (JEM) Transfer

JEM teams comprise community volunteers and groups who may be activated by HRM EMO to assist at designated support centres to assist in coordinating a local response. These teams are not registered non-profit organizations. Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency purchases equipment and supplies through HRM's procurement process and the assets remain the property of the Municipality. As such, funds allocated to support JEM teams are not 'grants' and do not fall under Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM. In 2018, \$7,226 has been transferred from Operating Account C801-8004 to Operating Account C801 - 6933 to fund the purchase of equipment and supplies for the JEM teams.¹

III. Proposed Program Evaluation

This program has been in effect for three (3) years. Staff recommend a review to determine the incremental impact of funding and administrative efficiencies for both HRM and eligible applicants. The current program lacks a funding threshold² to distinguish government versus self-generated revenues and avoid duplication or overlap. The implications of Section 306 of the *HRM Charter* also warrant consideration in relation to assistance to volunteer search and rescue groups. Specifically, sub-section 306(1) of the *HRM Charter* states: "A body corporate may apply to the Municipality for registration as an emergency service provider to provide emergency services other than fire services." This form of recognition expands the scope of assistance by which a Municipality might support volunteers. Further, sub-clause 5(1)(i)(ia) of the *Assessment Act* permits exemption from real property tax for property owned by a registered emergency service provider used solely for the activities of the non-profit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

¹ Currently, there are five (5) JEM teams: Eastern Shore, Musquodoboit Valley, Riverlake & District, Sheet Harbour & Area, and Western Region. Recruitment is underway to convene JEM teams in urban areas.

² A maximum value of municipal funding expressed as either a dollar figure and/or a percentage.

C801-8004 Emergency Measures: Grants 2018 Budget	\$148,500
Less JEM allocation	(\$7,226)
Less proposed Operating Grants (4)	(\$134,000)
Less proposed Capital Grants (2)	(\$7,274)
Balance	\$0

RISK CONSIDERATION

Low. Financial reports are submitted annually to Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Grants Committee comprises four (4) members of Regional Council of which one (1) must be a member of the Audit & Finance Standing Committee, and six (6) members of the general public. The Chair shall be appointed by the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ALTERNATIVES

The Grants Committee could recommend that Regional Council not approve a grant, or approve a grant in a different amount.

The Grants Committee could recommend that Regional Council not direct the CAO to conduct a review of the program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Capital Grants: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria.
2. Requests Not Recommended for Funding.
3. Other Municipal Assistance: Fiscal 2018-19.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Capital Grants: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

As stated in policy (Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM) a capital grant is:

- a non-recurring financial award towards the purchase of large equipment, the purchase of real property, construction, expansion or retrofit of a facility or amenity including in-ground infrastructure and telecommunications capacity, instrumentation or specialized safety equipment, and major structural repairs to existing amenities (Section 2.g);
- supports the purchase of real property, substantive structural repairs or expansion of an existing facility or infrastructure owned by the non-profit organization, the purchase of instrumentation, specialized or safety equipment in excess of \$500 per item, including ancillary parts or operating system (Section 4.2);

The application form provides directions to potential applicants. The evaluation criteria for capital grants requested under the grants to volunteer search and rescue program is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Weighted Score for Capital Grant Evaluation		
Category	Rationale	Score
Mandatory Standards		25
Safety	Life safety systems, specialized large-scale rescue equipment	20
Service Capacity	Vehicle, telecommunications, computerized service enhancement	20
Real Property	Acquisition, construction, expansion, retrofit, capital improvement, environmental remediation	20
Incremental Impact	The project cannot proceed in whole or in part without municipal funding	15
		100

Requests Not Recommended for Funding

Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search and Rescue – Sheet Harbour – Capital Grant/Property

A grant of \$40,000 is requested towards construction of a storage garage for vehicles and equipment (total costs stated as \$127,500). The application is incomplete: only one quote provided for a steel garage costing \$27,680. In accordance with sub-clause 4(2)(b) with the exception of highly specialized equipment, a minimum of two (2) quotes shall be submitted to substantiate the value of the funding request.

In 2018, Council required that the Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search and Rescue return two (2) of HRM's grants totalling \$38,125 to the Municipality, less an amount of \$16,500 towards deed migration, legal fees and a plan of survey. These grants were issued to this organization towards the same project (storage garage costing \$82,000) in 2013 (Community Grants Program) and 2015 (Volunteer Search & Rescue Grants Program), and had been held in a GIC with a \$50,000 provincial government grant pending a land lease agreement. The balance of \$21,625 that was returned is being held in HRM's General Contingency Reserve and, as per the direction of Regional Council, will be released when the following conditions have been met:

- (i) confirmation of land ownership by Sheet Harbour Ground Search and Rescue, or an executed long-term lease agreement of 20 years between Sheet Harbour Ground Search and Rescue and the land owner;
- (ii) Provision of revised construction estimates and a construction start-date; and
- (iii) Confirmation of the society's contribution to the capital project, including the interest paid on the previous funding issued by HRM.

Although additional costs were incurred in the acquisition of land (the \$16,500 retained by the group), the application appears to have under-stated project funding sources. Namely, interest earned and provincial funding received to date.

The society can request the balance held in the General Contingency Reserve Q421 be released in 2018 But must provide the documentation attached to the release of funds. Refer to staff for assistance with financial reporting.

Attachment 3

Other Municipal Assistance Fiscal 2018-19

Table 2. Municipal Assistance: Fiscal Year 2018		
Organization	Tax Relief	Other
Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$3,115	
Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	\$5,896	
Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team	Not Assessed.	Less than market value lease (\$1.00/yr). Value of discounted rent not stated.
Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue	Not Assessed.	Acquired land in 2018.
	\$9,011	

Excludes any financial assistance awarded under the *District Capital Fund* or *District Activity Fund*.