

Administrative Order One, the *Procedures of Council Administrative Order*, Schedule 2, Audit and Finance Standing Committee Terms of Reference,

8. The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and make recommendations on proposals coming to the Council outside of the annual budget or tender process including:
 - (c) proposed changes in any operating or project budget items;

The *Financial Reserves Administrative Order*

5. The Audit and Finance Standing Committee shall review and recommend to the Council for its consideration all impacts to the Reserves.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Audit and Finance Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council provide a \$50,000 grant from the Options Reserve (Q421) to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation to support humanitarian relief efforts for Ukraine as a result of the invasion by Russia.

BACKGROUND

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Internationally considered as an act of aggression, it has become the largest conventional military attack in Europe since World War II. The invasion has triggered Europe's largest refugee crisis since that war, with more than 4.2 million Ukrainians leaving their country and a quarter of the population displaced.

On February 25, 2022 the Province of Nova Scotia donated \$100,000 to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation to provide humanitarian aid and support to the people of Ukraine. In addition to monetary support, and in response to measures taken by the federal government, Nova Scotia is also expediting immigration applications for Ukrainians.

A non-comprehensive media scan of other Canadian municipalities' responses to the humanitarian crisis revealed a variety of different approaches. HRM comparator cities St. John's and Victoria conducted flag raisings while Quebec City and Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo have offered immigration support. Efforts in other cities have included a flag raising ceremony in Winnipeg, installation of signage in Ottawa, and offer of immigration support in Toronto. The scan revealed at least three municipalities that have provided monetary donations: Guysborough, Nova Scotia (\$25,000); Dufferin, Ontario (\$20,000); and View Royal, British Columbia (\$10,000) have provided donations through the Red Cross.

DISCUSSION

The municipality does not have a formal program or policy to provide financial support to national or international relief efforts. In the absence of a policy, program or process to guide the municipal response to a request of this kind, it is at Council's discretion to make a financial contribution or grant to a registered Canadian charitable organization. The unprecedented scale of the Ukraine invasion in Europe and resulting humanitarian crisis provides a rationale for Council to contribute to the broader relief effort.

Contributions are not normally made by the municipality for charitable campaigns or projects located outside of the Halifax Region, but exceptions have been made in the past. In 2020, Regional Council provided a donation of \$100,000 toward Beirut explosion assistance through the Lebanese Consulate to the Canadian Red Cross. In 2016, Council provided a \$10,000 financial contribution to the Fort McMurray fire relief effort, which was in response to an organized effort by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. A contribution towards the Vimy Memorial was granted to the Royal Canadian Legion Nova Scotia Nunavut Command (headquartered in Dartmouth) and HRM participated in the Downie Wenjack Legacy Room Project through

a contribution to the Tides Canada Foundation.

In developing this report, staff reached out to the Nova Scotia Branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) to identify a preferred donation recipient. The UCC is the voice of Canada's Ukrainian community and brings together under one umbrella all national, provincial, and local Ukrainian Canadian organizations. Together with its member organizations, the Congress has been representing the interests of approximately 1.4 million Ukrainian Canadians since 1940. More information on the organization is available at www.UCC.ca

The UCC NS Branch is not directly accepting donations of goods from the public due to various logistical challenges associated with their delivery and distribution in Ukraine. However, the President of the Branch indicated that the organization is encouraging Canadians to support the Ukrainian people displaced by the Russian invasion by making monetary donations to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal fund organized in partnership between the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. It was established to coordinate our national efforts in assisting the Ukrainian people. The donated funds are used to purchase and deliver basic necessities and medicine, as well as provide emergency shelter and medical assistance. More information on the foundation is available at: www.cufoundation.ca

As of late March, more than \$6 million in humanitarian aid and support had been delivered to the Ukrainian people by the Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal. Using this funding, aid has been delivered to some of the hardest-hit cities in the north, east, and south of Ukraine. The Humanitarian Appeal has also delivered aid to Ukrainian displaced persons in Romania and Moldova. The Canada-Ukraine Foundation is working with more than a dozen organizations and projects to best use this funding to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is recommended that this one-time donation be paid from E400-8004 with funding from the Options Reserve Q421.

Budget Summary: Options Reserve Q421

Projected net available balances, 2022/23	\$4,987,622
Unbudgeted withdrawals as per recommendation	<u>\$ 50,000</u>
Projected available	\$4,937,622

<p><u>Options Reserve Q421 (previous Contingency Reserve):</u> As per approved business case the purpose of Options Reserve Q421 to provide resources for changes or additions to services or for grants to outside agencies. This is an unbudgeted withdrawal from the reserve.</p>

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In developing this report, staff reached out to the President of the Nova Scotia Branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Audit and Finance Standing Committee may choose to not provide a donation to humanitarian relief for Ukraine, to provide a different amount of donation, and/or provide a donation through a different organization.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

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.

Report Prepared by: Paul Johnston, Managing Director GREA, CAO Unit, 902.240.2759
