

TO: Chair and Members of Grants Committee

SUBMITTED BY: 
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 2, 2022

SUBJECT: **Volunteer Search & Rescue Grants Program: Recommended Awards
Fiscal Year 2022-2023**

ORIGIN

March 31, 2022 – Application deadline for grants under Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search and Rescue Organizations.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

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

79A(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4) the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
(a) The expenditure is included in the Municipality’s operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

...

Section 79C (1) The Council shall adopt a policy that requires the Municipality to disclose to the public the recipients of grants made by the municipality and the amount of those grants.

(2) A policy adopted under subsection (1) must include the

- (a) frequency and timing of disclosure;
- (b) content to be included in a disclosure; and
- (c) form in which the disclosure must be made.

(3) A policy adopted under subsection (1) may include any other matter that the Council considers necessary or reasonable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this policy.

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

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend Regional Council approve:

1. The award of four (4) Operating Grants as described in the Discussion section of this report for a total of \$141,300.

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.

As of the deadline a total of four (4) applications were received for Operating Grants and three (3) for Capital Grants.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Awards

(i) Operating Grants

Operating Grants are based on an average of three years of core recurring operating expenses deemed eligible under Section 5 of policy and exclude search call-out claims that are reimbursed by the agent of jurisdiction. The value of operating grant is based on the average of the preceding three (3) year actuals as itemized in the applicant's financial reporting, excluding any expenditures deemed ineligible under Section 5 of the policy.

Table 1. Proposed Operating Grants – Fiscal Year 2022/23		
Organization	Proposed Award¹	Status
Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$24,680.00	Registered charity. Property owner.
Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	\$70,750.00	Registered charity. Property owner.
Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$19,990.00	Registered society. Occupant of HRM-Owned Property.
Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue	\$25,880.00	Registered society. Property owner
TOTAL	\$141,300.00	

¹ As operating expenses exceeded the allocated budget by \$34.00, the proposed awards have been reduced and rounded down to meet the allocated budget for this Financial Year.

Actual Operating Expenses	Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team	Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue Team
2019/20	\$24,057.00	\$74,403.00	\$16,567.00*	\$29,728.00
2020/21	\$18,435.00	\$64,768.00	\$28,989.00	\$21,465.00
2021/22	\$31,570.00	\$73,119.00	\$14,432.00	\$26,922.00**
3-Year Average	\$24,687.00	\$70,763.00	\$19,996.00	\$25,888.00

* MVGSAR did not submit 2019 actual expenses therefore amount awarded in 2020/21 of \$16,657 was used in calculations.

** SHGSAR did not submit 2021 actual expenses therefore amount awarded in 2021/22 of \$26,922 was used in calculations.

(ii) Project-Specific Grants

In 2022, three (3) Capital Grant applications were received for a combined total of \$36,887.39 in requests. However, due to the value of the requests for operating grants, all of the available funding was allocated and as a result, there was no funding remaining to consider project specific grants.

Halifax Regional Search & Rescue – Capital Grant

The HSAR team applied for a grant in the amount of \$10,461.45 for the acquisition of a DJI Enterprise II Advanced Drone and supporting search equipment to provide aerial search capability for HSAR. After extensive research, including consulting with Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency, the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems committee is recommending moving forward with the acquisition of one DJI Mavic Enterprise 2 Advanced which costs a total of \$13,476 plus HST. This project will provide the team with real-time custom mapping capability, a speaker and aerial spot light, plus one training aircraft. Due to DJI requirements, this a sole-source award, utilizing the established vendor to Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency. In 2022, the value of this capital grant request (\$10,461.45) exceeds the balance remaining in the 2022 program budget and therefore we cannot fund this capital request for this Financial Year.

Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue – Capital Grant

The ESGSAR team applied for a grant in the amount of \$5,925.94 for the purchase and installation of a hard-shelled cap and sliding cargo tray for the Team's 2020 Ford F150 support vehicle. The cover that came with the vehicle limits what can be stored under it, such as remote rescue gear, Communications Repeater "B", etc. which means any items higher than the box height cannot be stored or transported on the truck unless the cover is folded up, exposing the items to the weather. There is also limited ability to secure these items on the back of the truck. Furthermore, the loading and unloading of large, bulky or heavy items requires personnel to climb into the truck. This has become a safety issue in most weather conditions the Team is called out for. ESGAR's 2014 Ford F150 support truck came with a Lee hard-shelled cap and a sliding cargo tray. These features are being used as an interim measure to resolve the issues the Team is experiencing with the 2020 support vehicle. In 2022, the value of this capital grant request (\$5,925.94) exceeds the balance remaining in the 2022 program budget and therefore we cannot fund this capital request for this Financial Year.

Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue – Conditional Grant

The MVGSAR team applied for a conditional project grant in the amount of \$20,500 to replace a septic field. In Fiscal Year 2022/23, MVGSAR anticipates occupying the former Elderbank Fire Hall. HRM Corporate Real Estate requires that the septic field needs to be replaced, which includes the installation of a new discharge pipe, tank, and disposal field. The MVGSAR team secured one quote for the services contingent upon the receipt of engineered drawings. The quoter indicated that the quote is higher than anticipated because the project requires these engineered drawings which the team will secure after occupying the building. Additional refinement of the quotes and grant ask will be done at that time and they

anticipate being able to lower the amount requested at that time. They are currently working with Halifax Regional Municipality Real Estate to secure access to the building. Council approved the disposal of the property to the team and they are working with Halifax Regional Municipality to take possession of the property. In 2022, the value of this capital grant request (\$20,500.00) exceeds the balance remaining in the 2022 program budget and therefore we cannot fund this capital request for this Financial Year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total funding allocated to GSAR grants to HRFE is \$141,300.00. The current grant policy allows for the operational expenses (as laid out above in operating grants) to be funded first, then the remaining balance is used to fund capital grants. This year, the operating grants have exceeded HRFE's budget allocation and therefore operating grants have been reduced to meet the budget amount and zero funding remained to fund the capital grants.

The combined total of the grants is \$141,300; funded from Operating Account C801-8004 and has been budgeted for in the approved 2022/23 operating budget.

RISK CONSIDERATION

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provincial legislation mandates that municipalities notify the public of all grants.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could overturn an award, amend the value of an award; or amend any proposed terms and conditions of funding.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Capital Grants: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria
2. Other Municipal Assistance: Fiscal Year 2022-23

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: Erica Fleck, Assistant Chief, Emergency Management/Community Risk Reduction, HRFE
902.490.4213;
Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead Grants & Contributions, Finance & Asset Management
902.490.5469

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	Legislative requirement, insurance liability, code or by-law compliance, standards required by agent of jurisdiction	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

Other Municipal Assistance Fiscal 2022-23

Municipal Assistance: Fiscal Year 2022		
Organization	Tax Relief	Other
Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$2,817.67	
Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	\$7,000.00	
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	\$1,126.00	
	\$10,943.67	

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