



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.1.9
Halifax Regional Council
September 10, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 27, 2024

SUBJECT: **Volunteer Search & Rescue Grants Program: Recommended Awards Fiscal Year 2024-25**

ORIGIN

Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search and Rescue/EMO Organizations provides financial assistance to volunteer ground search and rescue teams in support of services provided within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four (4) ground search and rescue ("GSAR") organizations are eligible to receive an annual operating grant to help sustain a portion of their annual operational costs. Under current policy (Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM) the grant value is based on an average of the prior three years actual expenditures. In 2023, an increase in the value of these awards was approved by Regional Council and adoption of a Municipal Registry of Volunteer Emergency Services Providers (Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM) has resulted in tax exempt status for real property owned by those GSAR teams listed in the registry. Pending adoption of multi-year funding under a new individual service agreement model, it is recommended that the value of operating grant remain unchanged in this fiscal year. Minor amendments to Section 13 of policy are recommended to expedite payment in this fiscal year.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council approve

1. Minor amendments to Section 13 of Administrative Order 2014-001-ADM included as Attachment 1 and Attachment 2 of this report; and
2. the award of four (4) Operating Grants as listed in Table 1 of the Discussion section of this report for a combined total of \$199,864.78 from Operating Account C801-8004.

BACKGROUND

Volunteer search and rescue teams assist all three levels of government in the event of a missing person search, an evacuation, a natural or man-made disaster, or an 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/or equipment. Through Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM, HRM provides operating and project-specific grants to support such organizations.

DISCUSSION

Operating Grants are based on an average of three years of core recurring operating expenses deemed eligible under Section 5 of the current policy, excluding search call-out claims that are reimbursed by the agent of jurisdiction, as itemized in the applicant’s financial reporting for fiscal years 2021 to 2023.

Table 1. Proposed Operating Grants – Fiscal Year 2024/2025		
Organization	Proposed Award¹	Status
Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$31,046	Registered charity. Property owner.
Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team	\$82,601	Registered charity. Property owner.
Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$52,865.55	Registered society. Property owner.
Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue Team	\$33,352.23	Registered society. Property owner
TOTAL	\$199,864.78	

Minor amendments to policy are recommended to expedite payment in this fiscal year. Any repeal or additional amendments to the current Administrative Order, or adoption of an alternate service agreement model, will be addressed in a future staff report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As described in Table 1, the four GSAR groups are receiving operating grants for a proposed projected total of \$199,864.78. Funding for these operating grants can be accommodated from the approved 2024/2025 Operating Budget from operating cost centre C801-8004.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Low. Financial statements were submitted in 2023 by the Ground Search Rescue Teams.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could refuse to grant an award, amend the value of an award, or amend any proposed terms and conditions of funding.

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.*
- *Administrative Order 2019-007-ADM Respecting Public Disclosure of Municipal Grants.*
- *Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM Respecting Municipal Registry of Emergency Services Providers.*

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Changes to Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM.
2. Amending Administrative Order Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM.

Report Prepared by: Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead Grants & Contributions, Finance & Asset Management
902.490.5469; Peter Greechan, Community Developer Grants & Contributions, Finance &
Asset Management, 902.497.0479

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2014-018-ADM
RESPECTING GRANTS TO VOLUNTEER SEARCH AND RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS**

Application Review Process

13. ~~Fire & Emergency Service staff~~ Subject to section 13A, the Chief Administrative officer, or their designates, shall review applications and prepare a report for consideration by the HRM Grants Committee for recommendation to Regional Council for approval.

13A. Notwithstanding section 13 of this Administrative Order and the HRM Grants Committee Terms of Reference Council may, by resolution, award a grant under this Administrative Order without a recommendation from the HRM Grants Committee.

Amending Administrative Order

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2014-018-ADM**

Administrative Order on Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue/EMO Organizations

BE IT RESOLVED as an Administrative Order by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM, the *Administrative Order on Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue/EMO Organizations*, is amended, as follows:

1. Section 13 is amended by:
 - (a) striking out the words and symbol “Fire & Emergency Service staff” before the word “shall”;
 - (b) adding the words and commas “Subject to section 13A, the Chief Administrative Officer, or their designates,” before the word “shall”.

2. The following new section is added after section 13 and before section 14:

13A. Notwithstanding section 13 of this Administrative Order and the HRM Grants Committee Terms of Reference, Council may, by resolution, award a grant under this Administrative Order without a recommendation from the HRM Grants Committee.

Done and passed in Council this ____ day of _____, 202__.

MAYOR

MUNICIPAL CLERK