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Item No. 7.1.1
Grants Committee
March 2, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of HRM Grants Committee

SUBMITTED BY: *Original signed*

Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO
Original signed

Doug Trussler, Chief Fire & Emergency Services

DATE: February 4, 2015

SUBJECT: **Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue Organizations Recommended Awards 2014**

ORIGIN

January 21, 2015 – Audit & Finance Standing Committee approval in principle of proposed Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM.

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

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter (2008) S. 79 (au) respecting Council's authority to awards grants and contributions.
Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue Organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend Regional Council approve the award of operating and capital grant funding to the four (4) volunteer ground search and rescue organizations described in the Discussion section of this report for a combined total of \$138,500 from Operating Account C801-8004.

BACKGROUND

Volunteer ground search and rescue organizations 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 are based out of predominantly rural locations their service areas cover the entire Halifax Regional Municipality and on occasion more than one unit may be called upon to provide volunteer personnel and equipment.

Council has approved formal policy through which financial assistance may be provided to the groups for annual core operating expenses, capital projects, and non-recurring special projects as described in Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM.

DISCUSSION

Although an equal distribution of funds appears contrary to a merit-based evaluation, it is proposed that Funding be divided equally among the eligible applicants to accommodate the timing of policy approval. If approved, this interim approach is as follows:

- An allocation of up to \$10,000 to assist Joint Emergency Management (JEM) teams whereby HRM purchases equipment and supplies and owns the assets;
- Up to \$16,500 for the reimbursement of core operating costs incurred by a volunteer search and rescue team in fiscal year 2014-15;
- The balance of \$72,500 be divided equally among the four teams representing an amount of up to \$18,125 for an identified capital project or projects;
- The reporting timeline for 2014 capital or special project awards be extended by one (1) year to allow for final reports and proof of payment on or before March 31, 2016.

On a go-forward basis, the overall funding strategy is to increase the proportion of funds allocated to core operating so as to secure organizational stability and service quality/capacity resulting in a corresponding decrease in funds available for capital projects. Commencing in 2015, capital and special project requests will be evaluated on individual merit, priority or urgency to maximize the impact of public funding. The anticipated outcome would be a shift the groups' own fundraising efforts to capital projects. Arguably, it is easier to raise funds, corporate sponsorship, or grants from government or foundations for tangible assets as compared to recurring operating expenses. The teams will be encouraged to consider collaborative projects for specialized equipment or special projects.

Operating grants are awarded based on reimbursement of eligible expenses and original receipts must be remitted and reviewed so as to avoid duplicate payment for searches billed back to an agency. With few case-by-case exceptions, capital grants and special project grants will be paid out in full with final reporting due by end of fiscal year (March 31).

1. Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team – Chezzetcook

Founded in 1974 the Team is a registered Canadian charity and a non-profit society. Presently, the organization own a small facility in Head of Chezzetcook and a former school bus retrofitted as a command/logistics vehicle, trailer and a boat for shore-line searches. Annual revenues comprise grants from HRM and EMO Nova Scotia, agency search reimbursements, and self-directed fundraising and donations. HRM provides an annual tax grant. The group have requested a capital grant towards the purchase of a 2015 Ford crew cab pick-up truck with wrap-around decal at a total cost of \$35,000 plus HST¹.

¹ The grant is for a lump sum down payment, subsequent lease-to- purchase payments constitute an annual operating expense. As a registered charity the organization can apply to Revenue Canada for a partial tax refund.

It is recommended that the Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team be awarded an operating grant of up to \$16,500 for fiscal year 2014 and a capital grant of \$18,125 towards the purchase of a vehicle.

2. Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team – Lakeview

The Team was established as the Waverley Ground Search & Rescue in 1972². The organization is a registered Canadian charity and a non-profit society. The organization owns a former school property in Lakeview donated by HRM, logistics and command vehicles, and assorted equipment. Annual revenues comprise grants from HRM and EMO Nova Scotia, agency search reimbursements, and self-directed fundraising and donations. HRM provides an annual tax grant. The team has requested a capital grant towards the purchase of a rescue boat and enclosed trailer.

It is recommended that the Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team be granted an operating award of up to \$16,500 for fiscal year 2014 and a capital grant of \$18,125 towards the purchase of a boat and trailer.

3. Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team – Middle Musquodoboit

Founded in 1983, the Team is a registered non-profit society. The Team own trucks and equipment. Annual revenues comprise grants from HRM and EMO Nova Scotia, agency search reimbursements, and self-directed fundraising and donations. The team has requested a capital grant towards the purchase of a replacement 4-wheel drive transport vehicle at a total estimated cost of \$30,000 plus HST.

It is recommended that the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team be awarded an operating award of up to \$16,500 for fiscal year 2014 and a capital grant of \$18,125 towards the purchase of a replacement vehicle.

4. Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue – Sheet Harbour

Incorporated as a non-profit society in 2003, the Team leases premises for the storage of vehicles and equipment. In 2014, Council approved a land lease for the construction of a garage which is expected to be operational in 2015. Annual revenues comprise grants from HRM and EMO Nova Scotia, agency search reimbursements, and self-directed fundraising and donations. A capital grant requested towards erecting a large garage structure purchased with provincial funds; HRM's contribution under the *Community Grants Program* will be used for ground preparation and concrete footings/sub-floor.

It is recommended that the Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue be awarded an operating grant of up to \$16,500 for fiscal year 2014 and a capital grant of \$18,125 towards facility construction.

2015-16 Program: As per policy the application deadline for the 2015 fiscal year and hereafter is March 31, 2015.

Outcome Measures: On a go-forward basis, applicants will be asked to provide data to substantiate the impact of public funding on specific outcome measures including but not limited to:

- Volunteer recruitment protocols and retention;
- Measures to secure the safety of volunteers;

² Name change in 1996.

- Volunteer accreditation;
- Buildings and amenities in a state of good repair;
- Vehicles and heavy equipment in a state of good repair;
- Operating efficiencies and collaboration

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

C801-8004 Emergency Measures: Grants 2014 Budget	\$148,500
Less Proposed Operating Grants (4)	(\$66,000)
Less Proposed Capital Grants (4)	(\$72,500)
Balance	\$10,000¹

Note: Joint Emergency Teams (JEM) are not incorporated entities; the purchase of equipment and supplies is procured through Fire & Emergency Services and the assets owned by HRM. An allocation of up to \$10,000 has been set aside in 2014.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Grants Committee comprises four (4) members of Council appointed by a Community Council and six (6) members of the general public.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ALTERNATIVES

That Grants Committee could overturn or amend a recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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