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Item No. 9.1.3
Grants Committee
January 4, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of HRM Grants Committee

SUBMITTED BY:

Original signed

Chief Doug Trussler, Fire & Emergency Services

DATE: October 27, 2015

SUBJECT: **Volunteer Search & Rescue Grants Program Recommended Awards –
Capital Projects: Fiscal Year 2015-16**

ORIGIN

February 3, 2015 – Council's approval of Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM that provides for annual operating and capital grants to recognized volunteer search and rescue organizations located within HRM.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter (2008) s.79 (1) (av) respecting Council's authority to award grants and contributions and 79(2) any award granted pursuant to s.79(1) shall be publicized in a regional newspaper.
Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search & Rescue Organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. A capital grant in the amount of \$6,500 to the Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue from Account C801-8004;
2. A one-time conditional capital grant of \$15,000 to Halifax Ground Search and Rescue from Account C801-8004.

BACKGROUND

As noted in the report to the meeting of Regional Council March 2, 2015, the overall funding strategy is to increase municipal assistance for recurring essential operating expenses so as to secure/stabilize service resulting in a corresponding decrease in funding for capital projects. The anticipated outcome is a shift towards the groups' own fundraising for capital projects. Commencing in 2015, any capital awards are based on an evaluation of individual merit.

Administrative Order number 2014-018-ADM was approved by Regional Council at the February 03 2015 regular Regional Council meeting. Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM allows volunteer search and rescue organizations in HRM to apply for cash grants under three funding streams:

- 1) **Operating Grant:** To support general and on-going operational needs of the organization.
- 2) **Capital Grant:** to support purchase of real property, substantive structural repairs, expansion of facility or infrastructure or purchase of specialized or safety equipment, etc.
- 3) **One-Time Special Project Grant:** which supports an extra-ordinary expenditure not eligible for consideration as a recurring operation cost or a capital grant.

Capital awards are based on an evaluation of individual merit. The 2015 program received two (2) one-time applications for capital grants. The submissions were evaluated using standard scoring criteria as set out in **Attachment 1** of this report.

DISCUSSION

1. Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue Team (ESGSAR) – Head of Chezzetcook

The Team is a registered Canadian charity and incorporated in Nova Scotia as a non-profit society. A capital grant of \$7,615 was requested to fully fund the purchase of an inverter generator to power a command vehicle's systems in the field including computers, lights, heat, and communications systems. An upgrade to an inverter generator (~\$4,000 to \$5,400) helps control for power surges. The old system is nearing the end of its functional lifecycle and will be kept as a back-up. The generator is attached to the rear of the vehicle and a retrofit will be constructed to allow for a hydraulic lift mechanism (~\$2,216). A grant in the amount of \$6,500 is recommended using the lower of the quotes supplied, no contribution proposed from the applicant, and a deduction to the HST. As a registered charity the group can apply to Revenue Canada for a partial HST rebate.

It is recommended that a capital grant of \$6,500 be awarded to the Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue Team for the purchase of a mobile generator and hydraulic lift device.

2. Halifax Regional Search and Rescue Team (HRSAR) – Lakeview

The Halifax Ground Search and Rescue Team (HRSAR) is a registered Canadian charity and incorporated in Nova Scotia as a non-profit society. A capital grant of \$29,980.26 was requested towards the purchase of 175 jackets at a total cost \$64,980.26 (\$371.31 each). Partial funding has been confirmed from the Province (Emergency Service Provider Fund, Department of Municipal Affairs) and the applicant's contribution is \$15,000. This item forms part of the society's 5-year plan to issue a complete uniform to all members¹.

Typically, clothing is not accepted as a capital expense as noted in Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM and referenced in **Attachment 1** of this report. The policy does allow for the purchase of specialized or safety equipment costing in excess of \$500 per item or personal apparel if required for personal safety or identification to the general public (Section 5.7).

¹ Items include: hard shell jacket; cargo pants/shirt, t-shirt, baseball cap and gaiters; thermal layers; and hard shell pants to match jacket.

In establishing the eligibility of the request staff reference Nova Scotia EMO Standards and Operational Guide for Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue and the CSA Group Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada's Z1620 Ground Search and Rescue Core Competency Standard. The applicable exerts are included in **Attachment 2** of this report. The staff evaluation concluded that the 'standard' described in the technical specifications issued by HRSAR to suppliers are those desired by the association and are *not* standards required by legislation, regulations or an agent of jurisdiction² and that protective needs when in traffic areas³ can be addressed through various means and at a lower cost.

Halifax Regional Municipality values the contribution of volunteers in support of EMO operations and supports adherence to mandatory safety standards. However, the standard to which HRSAR aspires is exceptionally high and has not been adopted or endorsed by HRM Fire & Emergency Services or Halifax Regional Police.

In the alternative, a contribution of up to a maximum of \$150 per item for up to 100 items is proposed. This funding threshold takes into account that (i) in general clothing is not considered a capital cost, (ii) any award will be precedence-setting with the context of this designated program, and (iii) accommodates other local search and rescue groups with less financial capacity. If approved, HRM's contribution would bring the total of committed funds to \$50,000.

The society has the option to (i) buy fewer items, (ii) reduce their technical standards and purchase a product at lower cost per item, or (iii) phase the purchase in accordance with available funds. It is also important to note that *HRM is not purchasing clothing for volunteers*; the society is buying a product in accordance with its' own operational priorities. And, because HRM is not providing uniforms the society is free to seek corporate sponsorship⁴. Further, any award shall be one-time only and does not indicate municipal financial support for the purchase of personal apparel or uniforms.

It is recommended that a one-time capital grant of \$15,000 be awarded Halifax Ground Search and Rescue towards the purchase of safety/identification jackets conditional upon the purchase of protective clothing for an equipment loan program and not personal apparel, and further that any award approved by Regional Council does not infer endorsement of or additional future funding towards the purchase of personal uniforms for volunteers.

Policy Implications

For clarity, the program's administrative order could be amended to place personal apparel *required by an agent of jurisdiction* for the safety or identification of active search crews under the One-Time Project-Specific Grant category and either (i) a maximum total value of up to \$2,500 as is current policy or (ii) amend the maximum value of grant with a minimum and a maximum contribution per item.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2015, an amount of \$5,500 has been deducted from Account C801-8004 for Joint Emergency Management Teams. These volunteer groups are not registered entities: Fire & Emergency Services purchases equipment and supplies through HRM's procurement process and assets remain the property of the Municipality. The budget availability has been confirmed by Finance. Cost Centre C801 falls under the Fire and Emergency budget.

C801-8004 Emergency Management: Grants 2015 Budget	\$148,500
Less JEM allocation	(\$5,500)

² The current jacket provided to Halifax Regional Police patrols costs \$236.79 and is purchased through a competitive procurement process.

³ NS EMO standards referenced by applicant.

⁴ For example, HRM does not typically provide clothing for outdoor civic event volunteers but identification clothing may be included in a corporate sponsorship agreement.

Less Proposed Operating Grants (4)	(\$116,000)
Less Proposed Capital Grants (2)	<u>(\$21,500)</u>
Balance	\$5,500

*A balance of \$5,500 shall be retained in the event that actual expenditures in relation to JEM groups exceeds the initial allocation of \$5,500 (\$10,000 was set aside in 2014).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Grants Committee comprises four (4) members of Council and six (6) members of the general public. The Chair is appointed by the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ALTERNATIVES

The Grants Committee could overturn or amend a staff recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Capital Grants: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria.
2. Extracts from Nova Scotia EMO Standards and Operational Guide for Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue and CSA Group Z1620 Ground Search and Rescue Core Competency Standard Regarding Personal Protective Clothing.

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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Attachment 1

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 or 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).
- Personal apparel is ineligible for funding **except where such apparel is required for personal safety or identification to the general public** (Section 5.7).

The evaluation criteria for capital grants requested under the Grants to Volunteer Search and Rescue 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
TOTAL		100

Instructions to eligible search and rescue teams were included in the capital grant application form that states:

“Directions to Applicants

A capital expenditure is a non-recurring cost for the purchase of real property; the construction, expansion or retrofit of a facility or infrastructure; a capital improvement; or the purchase of large or specialized equipment costing over \$2,500 per item⁵. A capital grant does not cover minor repairs and preventive maintenance (recurring operating costs).

A capital improvement is a permanent structural replacement or alteration that sustains the value and utility of an existing building or infrastructure that extends the useful life of the property (eg. exterior wall, foundation, roof, windows, doors, structural weight-bearing beams, heating and ventilation system, fire

⁵ Purchases costing under \$2,500 can be considered under the one-time project-specific grant category. Minor repairs and maintenance are recurring operating costs.

suppression system, electrical service, well and septic system). Remediation of environmental contamination may also be considered.

With the exception of a long-term lease of 20 years or more, leasehold improvements are ineligible for consideration. A copy of the lease agreement should be included with the application.

Ineligible for consideration: minor repairs and maintenance, furnishings, interior walls and fixtures, interior or exterior painting, landscaping, parking lot, personal apparel except where such apparel is required for personal safety or identification”.

Attachment 2

Extracts from Nova Scotia EMO Standards and Operational Guide for Nova Scotia Ground Search and Rescue and CSA Group Z1620 Ground Search and Rescue Core Competency Standard Regarding Personal Protective Clothing.

The following extracts are for context, any bold type is for emphasis only and not in the original document.

1. Emergency Management Office Nova Scotia: GSAR Standards and Operational Guide

Item 2.0.6. All GSAR teams operating in the Province of Nova Scotia will be governed by this document. EMO NS understands that the search for missing persons in Nova Scotia is an AOJ⁶ responsibility; therefore the success of the GSAR program in Nova Scotia is dependent upon AOJ cooperation in ensuring compliance at GSAR operations.

Comment: Ground Search and Rescue in the Province are to be governed by these government standards and that the agent of jurisdiction needs to support this in order for these guidelines to work.

Item 3.11.4. Personal Protective Equipment Standard

3.11.4(1) "All GSAR personnel shall wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required by the Nova Scotia Occupational Safety and Health Act/Regulations when conditions exist that present a risk to the health and safety of personnel.

This includes but is not limited to:

1. Approved eye protection in areas of risk for eye injury;
2. Approved head protection in areas of risk for head injury;
3. Approved safety footwear for areas of risk for foot injury;
4. Approved safety gloves for areas of risk to hand injuries;
5. **Approved reflective clothing for areas of vehicle contact risk;**
6. All other required PPE as warranted by conditions.

Comment: The six (6) areas of potential injury do not list specific clothing requirements. Reflective clothing could, for example, be addressed through the use of reflective vests and reflective tape. Fire & Emergency Services/Halifax Regional Police are confident that protective clothing needs in traffic areas can be addressed by various means and at a lower cost.

3.11.4(2) All personnel shall wear appropriate clothing for the environmental conditions in which he/she will be tasked, such as appropriate dress for cold or wet conditions.

3.11.4(3) Personnel not wearing appropriate personal protective clothing shall not engage in field operations.

3.11.4(4) Team Leaders shall ensure that all personnel under his/her span of control are properly dressed and equipped to engage in the task as assigned.

3.11.4(5) In situations where there is health risks such as performing First Aid or patient handling/transportation universal precaution personal protective equipment shall be worn or used. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Rubber/Latex gloves;
2. Respiratory Protection (eg. N95 Mask);

⁶ AOJ means the agent of jurisdiction (eg. HRM Fire & Emergency Services, Halifax Regional Police, RCMP or EMO NS and in some cases a federal department or agency).

3. Approved eye protection;
4. Barrier Shield for Artificial Respiration.

2. Z1620 Core Competency Standard

This document is voluntary and is not part of any legislation. The content is intended to promote common skills and competencies, encourages efficiency and portability of knowledge and skills, and can form the basis of a training curriculum and performance measurement.

Item 4.2.4 Knowledge and Understanding

“Appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment shall be worn by searchers during any exercise, training or operational task including:

- a) Clothing to protect from the weather and environment;
- b) Limb and body protection worn while using equipment such as a chainsaw;
- c) Head, face/eye protection, footwear;
- d) High visibility apparel;
- e) Respiratory protection;
- f) Personal floatation devices (PFDs); and
- g) Safety equipment for speciality assigned tasks.

K2. The basics of clothing decisions for assigned GSAR operations in various weather conditions.

K3. Information on layering systems, pros and cons of available materials, and care of clothing.

K4. Selection of appropriate footwear for GSAR missions.

\K5. Personal protective equipment should form part of every searcher's SAR ready pack carried in the field.

K6. What a SAR ready pack is and why it is crucial to a mission.

K7. The essential contents of an SAR ready pack and how the season and the location of a search can influence the contents of the ready pack.

Comment: Search and rescue crews actively engaged in a search are required to wear appropriate personal protective clothing but the 'standard' is not described and therefore presumably established by the agent of jurisdiction, legislation or applicable regulations.