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**Item No. 9.1.1**  
**Grants Committee**  
**January 13, 2020**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Grants Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** - Original Signed -  
Chief Kenneth Stuebing, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Services

- Original Signed -  
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** July 25, 2019

**SUBJECT:** **Volunteer Search & Rescue Grants Program: Recommended Awards  
Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

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### **ORIGIN**

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

March 31, 2019 – Application deadline for the 2019-2020 program.

### **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;

....

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

*HRM Grants Committee Terms of Reference.* The duties of the HRM Grants Committee are to:

4.1 Advise Regional Council on all matters related to the allocation of grants, as defined by Regional Council.

### **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 \$128,921;

**RECOMMENDATION CONTINUES ON PAGE 2...**

2. A Capital Grant in the amount of \$2,334 to the Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue Team; and
3. A conditional capital grant in the amount of \$10,045 to the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team to be held by HRM pending submission of documentation demonstrating an ability to complete the purchases prior to March 31, 2020;

for a combined total cost of \$141,300 from Operating Account C801-8004.

**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. 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.

**DISCUSSION**

**I. Proposed Awards**

**(i) Operating Grants**

Operating grants are based on an average of three years of core recurring operating expenses 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. An evaluation of requests includes a review of the applicant’s financial statement and proposed budget, good governance, and accreditation (Policy, Section 10). Policy requires that applications be submitted by the stated deadline and any additional form of municipal assistance shall be disclosed in accordance with Section 7 of the policy.

| <b>Table 1. Proposed Operating Grants – 2019</b> |                       |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Organization</b>                              | <b>Proposed Award</b> | <b>Status</b>                                       |
| Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team        | \$31,233              | Registered charity, property owner.                 |
| Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team            | \$53,786              | Registered charity, property owner.                 |
| Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team  | \$15,747              | Registered Society. Occupant of HRM-Owned Property. |
| Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue      | \$28,155              | Registered Society.                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>\$128,921</b>      |   |

**(ii) Project-Specific Grants**

In 2019, two (2) applications were received for the purchase of equipment. Both are considered capital grants as defined in the Administrative Order and described in **Attachment 1** of this report. Applicants shall disclose any application or receipt of funds from any other government, corporate, foundation or personal donation sought or obtained in support of the capital project (Policy, Section 8). Late or incomplete applications may be deemed ineligible (Policy, Section 9).

In 2019, the combined value of capital grant requests (\$41,133) exceeds the balance remaining in the 2019 program budget.

**Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue Team – Head of Chezzetcook - Capital Grant/Equipment**

The ESGSAR team applied for a grant in the amount of \$2,334 to fully fund the purchase of an “off-the-lot” trailer purpose-built to transport kayaks and canoes used in shoreline searches. Quotes provided. The team is currently dependent upon members to transport the kayaks and related safety equipment in their personal vehicles and are concerned that equipment may be damaged or lost. The trailer would enable the storage of boats and accessories in a state of readiness reduce response times.

***A capital grant in the amount of \$2,334 to the Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue Team is recommended to fully fund the purchase of a boat trailer.***

**Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team – Middle Musquodoboit – Capital Grant/Equipment**

The MVGSAR application states the team’s bus used as a mobile command vehicle is not capable of being certified as road-worthy and is beyond repair; as such, they do not have a functioning unit to deploy at search operations and must rely on other teams for this capacity. The society has applied for a capital grant in the amount of \$38,799 towards the purchase of two (2) items of equipment:

- a used SUV vehicle (2012) – lowest quote \$29,800; and
- a 7’x16’ enclosed trailer costing \$12,499.

Using the lowest vehicle quote plus a sole-source trailer quote the combined projected cost (HST included) is \$42,299<sup>1</sup>. The value of grant exceeds the balance remaining in the program budget. Therefore, a conditional grant is recommended whereby HRM will withhold the grant payment pending confirmation from the society that they have the funds to proceed with both purchases in this fiscal year.

***A conditional capital grant in the amount of \$10,045 to the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team is recommended towards the purchase of a vehicle and trailer. Funds shall be retained by HRM pending submission of documentation demonstrating an ability to complete the purchases prior to March 31, 2020.***

Note: See Alternative #2.

Recipients of a capital grant must submit a final report on a form provided by HRM, including total cost and breakdown of expenditures, original receipts or proof of payment, a description of the project and outcomes (Policy, Section 17).

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| C801-8004 Emergency Measures: Grants 2019 Budget | <b>\$141,300</b> |
| Less proposed Operating Grants (4)               | (\$128,921)      |
| Less proposed Capital Grants (2)                 | (\$12,379)       |
| <b>Balance</b>                                   | <b>\$0</b>       |

**RISK CONSIDERATION**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Using a total cost of \$42,299 and a grant request of \$38,799 the applicant’s cost-share would be \$3,500.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Grants Committee comprises four (4) members of Regional Council of which one (1) must be a member of the Audit & Finance Standing Committee, and six (6) members of the general public. The Chair shall be appointed by the Audit & Finance Standing Committee.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Grants Committee could recommend that Regional Council decline to approve a grant, or approve a grant in a different amount or with different terms and conditions of funding. If amended, the rationale is provided in the Committee's report attached to this staff report and forwarded to Regional Council for consideration.
2. The Grants Committee could amend the staff recommendation for the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team and recommend a capital grant in the amount of \$10,045 be directed to the purchase of a vehicle only.

The rationale supporting this alternative is that the enclosed trailer is secondary to a vehicle with which to tow the trailer. If \$10,045 is directed towards only the purchase of a vehicle costing \$29,800 the balance of \$19,755 must be confirmed either as the team's cost-share or from other sources as per Section 8 of the Administrative Order. Further, with the exception of highly specialized equipment, capital grant requests shall be supported by a minimum of two quotes (these were provided for the vehicle but only one quote for the trailer).

If the Grants Committee select this option, the amended motion would read:

*"A conditional capital grant in the amount of \$10,045 to the Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team is recommended towards the purchase of a vehicle. Funds shall be retained by HRM pending submission of documentation demonstrating an ability to complete the purchase, and the source(s) of funds, prior to March 31, 2020".*

Any carry forward would be limited to one (1) year (Policy, Section 21).

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Capital Grants: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria.
2. Other Municipal Assistance: Fiscal 2019.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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### 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**

| <b>Weighted Score for Capital Grant Evaluation</b> |  |              |
|--|--|--------------|
| <b>Category</b>                                    | <b>Rationale</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
| 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           |
|  |  | <b>100</b>   |

## Other Municipal Assistance Fiscal 2019-20

| <b>Municipal Assistance: Fiscal Year 2019</b>   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| <b>Organization</b>                             | <b>Tax Relief</b> | <b>Other</b>  |
| Eastern Shore Ground Search & Rescue Team       | \$3,046           | Schedule 26 fill tax relief.  |
| Halifax Regional Search & Rescue Team           | \$5,995           | Schedule 26 fill tax relief.  |
| Musquodoboit Valley Ground Search & Rescue Team | Not Assessed      | Less than market value lease (\$1.00/yr).<br>Value of discounted rent not stated. |
| Sheet Harbour & Area Ground Search & Rescue     | \$55              | Vacant land. Partial tax relief pending construction of garage.                   |
|   | <b>\$9,096</b>    |   |

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