

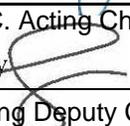
HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
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Item No. 14.1.6
Halifax Regional Council
May 31, 2016

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

John Traves, Q.C. Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Original Signed by 

Jane Fraser, Acting Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: 13 May 2016

SUBJECT: Requested Assistance to Fort McMurray

ORIGIN

Request to Mayor Savage from CFB Halifax Fleet Club Atlantic to match donations from residents of HRM for a benefit concert and auction held on May 13, 2016 in support of Fort McMurray wildfire victims.

Email from the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) offering to collect financial contributions on behalf of Nova Scotia municipalities and forward them to the appropriate authorities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Subclauses 79(1) (av) (v) and (vii) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides that the Council may expend money required by the Municipality for

(v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province,

(vii) a registered Canadian charitable organization.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council make a \$10,000 contribution to the UNSM collection for donation to the Red Cross for the Fort McMurray appeal.

BACKGROUND

A massive and unprecedented wildfire in and around Fort McMurray, Alberta, threatened a dozen communities in the area since it started spreading on May 1, 2016. On May 4th the Alberta government declared a provincial state of emergency and a mandatory evacuation order took effect, affecting approximately 80,000 people.

At the time of the writing of this report, the latest update from the Government of Alberta (May 16th) indicates, with respect to reentry and recovery included the following information:

- That fire conditions remain extreme in the province.
- That the recovery of Fort McMurray will occur in phases. The primary focus is to stabilize the community and the re-entry plan will be share in the coming days.
- Workers have entered the community to re-establish water services, electricity, gas services, sewage and wastewater, telephone services and other utilities.
- Work is also underway to inspect major infrastructure to ensure safety – this includes major roadways, bridges and health facilities.
- Five things need to be in place for re-entry:
 - Wildfire is no longer an imminent threat to the community
 - Critical infrastructure is repaired to provide basic service
 - Essential services, such as fire, EMS, police and healthcare are restored to a basic level
 - Hazardous areas are secure
 - Local government is re-established

Emergency Response – Cross Jurisdictional Support

All provinces and territories in Canada have a wild fire response Mutual Aid Agreement that is coordinated through CIFFC (Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre). As result of a formal request from CIFFC, the NS Department of Natural Resources is sending a team to Alberta and another to Manitoba. HRM Emergency Management Services (EMO) would be available; working through the provincial EMO to respond, if asked.

Emergency Relief and Recovery Assistance

The Red Cross indicates that donations could provide relief for those affected in the form of emergency food, clothing, shelter, personal services, and other necessities to help assist with recovery and resiliency. Donations made in response to Red Cross appeals are used to help communities and countries identified in the appeal recover from emergencies and disasters by providing immediate assistance and relief.

Once these urgent needs have been met, the Red Cross may use any remaining funds in and beyond the region to strengthen resilience to future emergencies and disasters or to provide humanitarian aid in the event that new needs arise. The Red Cross indicates fundraising costs related to any emergency appeal will not exceed five per cent.

DISCUSSION

CFB Fleet Club Atlantic held a benefit concert and silent auction on May 13, 2016 with all proceeds going to the Canadian Red Cross to support the victims of the Fort McMurray wildfires. The CFB Fleet Club Atlantic Marketing Chairman requested that the Halifax Regional Municipality match donations made at the event. Event organizers compare the Halifax event to an event being put on in Sydney with the support of Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM). Support provided by CBRM was largely in the form of in-kind support including venue (Centre 200), some equipment, and staff support. Another event that will also be supported by CBRM staff is planned for the Emera Centre for next week. The CFB Fleet Club Atlantic event held on May 13th raised \$30,000.

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities is currently collecting donations from member municipalities to donate to relief efforts via the Red Cross. The UNSM Board is encouraging all municipalities donate. UNSM will collect financial contributions. Any municipality contributing will be listed. UNSM will publicly announce the total contributions made by municipalities. Donation amounts are not finalized in most cases but appear to be ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 based on early information. In some cases communities have very strong links to Fort McMurray and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo because of worker migration from Nova Scotia to Alberta. While data specific to Fort McMurray are not available, from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, 621 persons migrated from Halifax to non-census metropolitan areas in Alberta. Over 2 ½ times that number migrated from other parts of NS to non-census metropolitan areas in Alberta (i.e. outside Calgary and Edmonton). (Source: Statistics Canada, Cansim table 051-0065.)

There is no policy, program or process to guide the municipal response to a request of this kind, as such; it is at Council's discretion to make a donation.

The unprecedented scale of the fires, evacuation and relief effort, the primary role of local government in emergency response and re-entry, and the region's connection to Fort McMurray, provide a basis for Council to make a donation to relief efforts. UNSM is providing a coordinated means for municipal governments in Nova Scotia to demonstrate support to the people and local government of Fort McMurray.

Staff are also in discussions with the Red Cross to provide to the Red Cross opportunities at HRM events throughout the summer to collect for Fort McMurray relief funds.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The contribution will be recorded as a Grant (8004) paid from M310 – Other Fiscal Services, and will be managed through the financial projections.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no community engagement done in the development of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications from this report.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) Halifax Regional Council may choose to make a donation of a different amount.
- 2) Halifax Regional Council may choose not to make a donation.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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

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