



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fire Service Funding Policy is to:

1. Outline the criteria for receiving an annual Fire Department Operating Grant;
2. Define what constitutes an “emergency” for the purposes of awarding grants to individual fire departments;
3. Define the criteria to be used in determining eligibility for a grant to an individual fire department based on an emergency situation;
4. Define the criteria to be used in assessing a request from the East Hants Fire Service for funding of a non-emergency initiative or project;
5. Outline the Fire Department Loan Program;
6. Outline the funding formula for the Fire Service Emergency Fund.
7. Define the parameters of the Rural Fire Capital Assistance Grant Program.

SCOPE

All fire departments operating within East Hants are covered under this policy unless specifically excluded.

POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Municipality of East Hants to support, within its financial capacity, requests for funding for the provision of fire services to the residents and businesses in the Municipality. To enable support under this policy, the Municipality will maintain a Fire Service Emergency Grant Fund in reserve. This support is provided in recognition of the significant contribution volunteer fire departments make to ensure safety in our communities in East Hants.

In addition to the fire levies collected through taxation and the Fire Department Loan Program, the Municipality may provide four types of funding to fire departments:

1. **Operating Grant**
2. **Emergency Funding**
3. **Global Fire Service Funding**
4. **Rural Fire Capital Assistance Funding**

Operating Grant

An annual Operating Grant will be paid to volunteer fire departments operating within the boundaries of the Municipality of East Hants whose assessment base is less than seventy five million dollars; this assessment cap will be increased by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year. As the majority of the assessment base for the

Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department is not within the boundaries of East Hants, Brooklyn Volunteer Fire Department is excluded from receiving an Operating Grant.

When a department reaches the assessment cap, the grant awarded to that department will be phased out in relation to the revenue generated by the excess assessment over the cap value. When the revenue generated from assessment that exceeds the cap is equal to the grant being awarded, grant funding to that department will cease: $(\text{Assessment} - \text{Assessment Cap}) \times \text{Rate}/\$100 = \text{Grant}$

The grant amount, set at \$9,181 in 2015/16, will be increased by CPI each year.

Application Requirements for Operating Grants

Departments who qualify for an Operating Grant will automatically be sent the operating grant.

Emergency Funding

For the purposes of considering requests for Emergency Funding, the following definition of emergency will be used:

An event or situation which at a particular point in time is perceived to significantly reduce the ability of a fire department to provide fire protection services in its designated area. The reduction in ability to provide fire protection service must be sudden, dramatic and generally unforeseeable. Circumstances which should have been foreseen and for which provision should have been made through general maintenance or fund raising activities are not perceived as an emergency. The decision to provide a reduced fire protection capability is perceived to have been made in the failure to obtain or engage in fund raising activities.

Funding for emergency purposes should only be used to assist with emergency situations relating to the provision of firefighting services and should not be used to enhance the emergency response or first responder capabilities of Fire Departments.

The Municipality reserves the right to consider exceptional circumstances such as low assessment base, or any other factors deemed important by the Municipality in coming to a decision on an exception basis.

Application Requirements for Emergency Funding

Applications for Emergency Funding will be administered on a request by request basis upon receipt of a written request from a fire department to the Municipality through the Fire Advisory Committee. The written request must detail the scope of the emergency, the cost to remedy the emergency and all other sources of funding the department has to contribute to the cost to remedy the emergency.

Fire departments applying for funding must obtain confirmation from the Director of Finance & Administration that the department's most recent financial statements are available and, if not, the department must provide them to the Director. At the discretion of the Director of Finance & Administration, the department may also be requested to provide up-to-date interim statements as of the date of the application.

In considering an application for Emergency Funding, Council shall also consider the department's ability to service debt.

Global Fire Service Funding

Funding may be provided from the Fire Service Emergency Fund for non-emergency projects as identified by the Fire Chiefs and that provide a common benefit to all fire departments in the Municipality. The awarding of global fire service funding shall not cause the balance in the Fire Service Emergency Fund to be less than \$75,000.

Application Requirements for Global Fire Service Funding

Requests for funding for proposed projects must be supported by 2/3 of Fire Chiefs who indicate their support in writing at the time of the request coming forward to the Municipality. A written overview of the project, including a budget identifying the total projected cost and sources of funding, must accompany the request.

Fire Department Loan Program

Small volunteer fire departments (a department in receipt of an Operating Grant in the year of loan application) are authorized to borrow funds from the Fire Service Emergency Fund to leverage funding from other levels of government to assist with the purchase of equipment used directly in response to a fire or emergency situation.

Money borrowed from the fund must not to exceed 50% of the total capital cost. The maximum allowable loan is \$20,000. Funds will only be made available if the loan to the department does not cause the balance of the Fire Service Emergency Fund to be less than \$75,000. Loans will be issued with a maximum payback of five years; loan payments will be held back from the annual levy.

Application Requirements - Fire Department Loan Program

Applications under the Fire Department Loan Program will be administered on a request by request basis upon receipt of a written request from a fire department to the Municipality through the Fire Advisory Committee. The written request must detail the equipment being purchased, the purpose of the equipment, the external funding being applied for and all other sources of funding the department has to contribute to the cost of the equipment.

Fire departments applying for funding must obtain confirmation from the Director of Finance & Administration that the department's most recent financial statements are available and, if not, the department must provide them to the Director. At the discretion of the Director of Finance & Administration, the department may also be requested to provide up-to-date interim statements as of the date of the application.

In considering an application for a loan, Council shall also consider the department's ability to service debt.

Application Deadline

There is no date by which applications must be received for either Loan, Emergency or Global Fire Service funding requests.

Fire Service Emergency Fund

The Fire Service Emergency Fund will be funded through the annual operating budget. The annual allotment to this fund was set at \$22,000 for 2015/2016 and will increase by CPI each year if budget allows.

Rural Fire Capital Assistance Fund

Rural volunteer fire departments of Rawdon, Kennetcook, Noel, Walton, Gore and Maitland are eligible for a Rural Fire Capital Assistance grant*. This grant will cover the cost of capital acquisitions related to firefighting including equipment, apparatus and buildings. This grant fund is not intended to fund operational costs, equipment repairs and maintenance or routine building maintenance (significant upgrades will qualify - new basement, roof or mechanical systems).

The fund will be application based and must be supported by majority vote at a duly called meeting of the membership. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Grant Review Committee, with award recommendations coming through consultation with Councillors representing the rural districts of East Hants (Districts 5, 6 & 11). Council will approve all Rural Fire Capital Assistance Fund grants. There is no annual deadline to apply.

*This grant program has approved funding for two fiscal years (2016/2017 & 2017/2018); the fund will be available until the money is awarded.

Council Approval

Council reserves the right to grant or reject any application for funding that may or may not qualify in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy. Where this policy references increasing amounts by CPI, Council reserves the right to waive the increases or alter the amounts to be paid or set aside as budget restrictions require.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Policy Editor	<p>The Policy Editor is a person having managerial and policy-making responsibility related to the writing, compilation and revision of content and will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies in their care and control are always up-to-date, reviewed annually or sooner if necessary • Draft new or edit existing policy content • Be able to interpret and explain policy content • Ensure policy documents are branded and any supporting documents, ie. applications forms are also branded and content consistent with the policy • Ensure policy content is relevant and accurate • Seek and secure approval recommendation of the policy from the Policy Owner • Seek and secure approval of the policy from the appropriate Approver; and, • Provide the final approved policy document to the Assistant Municipal Clerk



Title/Role	Responsibilities
Policy Owner	<p>The Policy Owner will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide oversight to ensure policies in their care and control are always up-to-date, reviewed annually or sooner if necessary by the assigned Policy Editor • Be able to interpret and explain policy content • Provide oversight to ensure policy documents are branded and any supporting documents, ie. application forms are also branded and content consistent with the policy • Provide oversight to ensure policy content is relevant and accurate • Review the policy and make recommendation for approval to the appropriate Approver; and, • Ensure that the final approved policy document has been provided to the Assistant Municipal Clerk
Approver	<p>The Approver will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Policy recommendations for approval consideration (approve, reject or edit); and, • Notify the Policy Editor, Policy Owner and Assistant Municipal Clerk of decision
Assistant Municipal Clerk	<p>The Assistant Municipal Clerk will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate an annual Policy Review; and, • Ensure final approved policies are maintained, stored and posted where appropriate

VERSION LOG

Version Number	Amendment Description	Amendment/Policy Editor	Amendment/Policy Owner	Approver	Approval Date
1.0	Fire Service Emergency Funding Policy	Director of Finance	Director of Finance	Council	June 23, 2010 Motion C10(268)
2.0	Fire Service Funding Policy - Change name. Per C15(59) document policy on operating grants and Fire loan program C15(162).	Manager of Administrative Services	Director of Finance & Administration	Council	January 27, 2016 Motion C16(6)
3.0	Rural Fire Capital Assistance grant program details added per staff report October 2016: C13(241) In effect until 2017/2018 - exchange rural allotment of gas tax with debt in USR to give to Fire Depts. In rural areas	Director of Finance & Administration	Director of Finance & Administration	Council	October 12, 2016 Motion C16(241)