



Subject: *Comfort Centre Funding Policy Request (Noel Fire Department) & Amendment to Municipal Grant Program Policy*

To: CAO for Corporate & Residential Services Committee

Date Prepared: November 6, 2023

Related Motions: C06(58), C06(187), C06(192), C06(289), C08(297), C09(180), C09(226), C09(389), C09(486), C10(124), C10(220), C10(252), C10(253), C11(173), C12(194), C12(195), C20(97), C23(68)

Prepared by: Kelly Ash, Emergency Management Coordinator

Approved by: John Woodford, Director of Planning & Development

Summary

The Comfort Centres and Reception Centres/Shelters Funding Policy was updated in 2020 to retain financial support information only. All other information was added to a Comfort Centre Plan. The Noel Fire Department is an approved comfort centre. The existing generator failed and had to be replaced. The group is requesting funding support through the policy.

As part of the 2020 Staff Report, it was noted that the Funding Policy would be “updated to give Staff the ability to approve future funding if all eligibility criteria have been met.” This is consistent with Council motion C12(295) that staff be authorized to “approve the application and not be required to seek Council approval.” This information did not transfer to the Municipal Grant Program Policy, and therefore Staff are recommending housekeeping amendments to enable this in the future.

Financial Impact Statement

As of November 6, 2023, there is \$52,434 remaining in the Comfort Centre Grants Reserve. This reserve was created to fund the purchase and installation of generators, electrical upgrades and storage sheds to house generators for facilities that were identified originally in 2006 as potential comfort centres.

The Noel Fire Department is requesting \$3,545.72 to help offset the cost of the acquisition of the new generator.

Recommendation

To approve the funding request to the Noel Fire Department; and

Amend the Municipal Grant Program Policy to allow Staff to award future funding requests.

Recommended Motion

To be presented at the November 21, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council (Policy):

Move that Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council approve a grant of \$3,542.72 be awarded to the Noel Fire Department for the purchase of a new generator, to be funded from Comfort Station Reserves.

Move that Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council give notice of intent to amend the Municipal Grant Program Policy to permit all future grants under the Comfort Centres and Reception Centres/Shelters Funding Policy to be awarded by Staff in accordance with the policy as outlined in the staff report as attached the Executive Committee Agenda on November 21, 2023.

To be presented at the November 29, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council:

Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council amend the Municipal Grant Program Policy to permit all future grants under the Comfort Centres and Reception Centres/Shelters Funding Policy to be awarded by Staff in accordance with the policy as outlined in the staff report as attached to the Executive Committee Agenda of November 21, 2023.

Background

In 2006, a report to Council identified a list of community halls and fire halls as potential facilities to be used as comfort centres in the event of an emergency. The original policy for possible funding was adopted in 2009, and amended periodically. In 2020, the original policy was repealed and replaced with the 2020 policy.

In June 2012, Council approved a grant for funding to the Rawdon District Fire Department. At the same time, they approved motion C12(195) indicating that if an application for funding met criteria set out in the policy, staff be authorized to approve the application and not be required to seek Council approval. This information did not transfer to the Municipal Grant Program Policy.

Discussion

Comfort centres are an important tool that enhance communities' resiliency to emergencies and reduce impacts of emergencies on vulnerable populations. It is important that comfort centres be identified and planned for in advance.

The funding policy was designed to provide financial support to these facilities. The Noel Fire Department is requesting a grant of \$3,542.72 under the policy for the replacement of a generator.

Council approved the authority to Staff to process these funding requests if they met the criteria noted in the policy in June 2012. This information was not included in the Municipal Grant Program Policy when it was originally created in October 2012. Therefore, Staff are recommending amendments to permit all future grant requests under the policy to be awarded by Staff.

Since the approval of the original list of facilities, there have been some changes. Some facilities have closed and some facilities have identified that they do not have the volunteer capacity to activate in the event of an emergency. As a result, Staff have identified other locations that could be used as a potential comfort centre, or shelter (if necessary). For example, the Upper Nine Mile River Community Hall was used as a reception centre in July 2022 during the flooding event that forced the evacuation of two campgrounds in the area.

As per Bylaw P-200-1, an amendment to P-200 Emergency Management Bylaw, the Emergency Management Coordinator shall perform such duties in accordance with the Emergency Management Plan. One of the main objectives in the plan is to "Ensure Preparedness". This includes ensuring that we have facilities available to provide reasonable coverage throughout the Municipality for the activation of a possible comfort centre or shelter. The Emergency Management Coordinator will continue to identify additional facilities, as needed, and work with those organizations should funding be required.

Attachments

Municipal Grant Program Policy rev 1.5 Nov 2023