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REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020

SUBJECT **Union of British Columbia Municipalities Grant for Volunteer Fire Departments - Motion of Support**

ISSUE SUMMARY

Volunteer-based fire departments provide public safety services in the Capital Regional District (CRD) Electoral Areas (EAs). The CRD is applying to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for grant funding for fire department training and equipment under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund program. UBCM requires that all grant applications be accompanied by a letter of support from the local government.

BACKGROUND

UBCM provides funding for many community based projects including volunteer-based fire departments. A 2019/2020 grant opportunity is available to support training and equipment for volunteer and composite (mixed paid and volunteer) fire departments. The CRD is the 'authority having jurisdiction' for electoral area fire departments which do not fall under an improvement district, and is applying on behalf of the departments.

Five fire departments expressed interest in the CRD applying for the grant on their behalf: South Galiano, North Galiano, Port Renfrew, Shirley and Otter Point. The grant funds would permit departments to upgrade equipment such as turnout gear, pumps, and wildland suppression tools and attend specialized training courses. The total funds requested through the grant application are \$117,965.93.

As part of the application process, UBCM requires a motion of support from the local government to receive and manage grant funding.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Board support an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for South Galiano, North Galiano, Port Renfrew, Shirley and Otter Point Fire Departments for equipment upgrades and training in the amount of \$117,965.93 and direct staff to provide overall grant management.

Alternative 2

That staff be directed to not submit the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Grant to the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for South Galiano, North Galiano, Port Renfrew, Shirley and Otter Point Fire Departments for equipment upgrades and training.

IMPLICATIONS

Operational Implications

The opportunity to apply for grants could provide fire departments with additional funds for training to ensure they continue to meet their service level commitments. While staff have repeatedly

communicated this opportunity, several fire departments have not submitted grant applications and staff continue to highlight the need to maintain training levels to enable existing service level certification to be maintained.

CONCLUSION

The CRD supports volunteer and composite fire departments in its unincorporated areas. The UBCM's Community Emergency Preparedness Fund contributes to volunteer-based fire department training and equipment. Staff recommend funding training and equipment upgrades for five electoral area fire departments through the program. If supported by the Board, UBCM will consider the CRD's grant application.

RECOMMENDATION

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Board support an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for South Galiano, North Galiano, Port Renfrew, Shirley and Otter Point Fire Departments for equipment upgrades and training in the amount of \$117,965.93 and direct staff to provide overall grant management.

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