

**REPORT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2021**

SUBJECT **COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Governments – Regional Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an update on the Capital Regional District (CRD) regional portion of the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Governments.

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Governments provided \$425 million across the province to assist local governments impacted by COVID-19. The CRD received \$2 million through two disbursements; \$1.4 million in November 2020 and \$0.6 million in March 2021. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing used two different formulae to determine the CRD disbursement. In turn, the CRD Board resolved (at the December 2020 and April 2021 meetings) the monies would be allocated to services using the same Ministry formulae resulting in the distribution summarized below:

Table 1 – Safe Restart Funding Allocation

Safe Restart Funding Allocation	November 2020	March 2021	Total Funding
Allocation for Regional Services	\$1,246,000	\$250,000	\$1,496,000
Allocation for Local Area Services	\$175,000	\$325,000	\$500,000
Total COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant	\$1,421,000	\$575,000	\$1,996,000

The program stipulated funding must be fully allocated to services by December 31, 2021. As of May 11, 2021, the Board approved distribution of the total \$1.5 million of the regional portion. The \$0.5 million of the Electoral Area (EA) portion has been applied to local service budgets in consultation with each EA Director. This was allocated through the July 2021 and November 2021 Financial Plan Amendments.

For the regional portion, the grants have been applied through a staff-administered application process designed to identify initiatives and screen for eligibility. The process required Executive Leadership Team (ELT) approval of initiatives which were prioritized based on eligibility, regional impact, and alignment with the program. Appendix A lists approved initiatives totaling the allocation to regional services.

IMPLICATIONS

Service Delivery Implications

Funds for the regional services allocation were used in alignment with the purpose of the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Governments in the service categories of emergency planning and response, computer and electronic technology, facility re-opening and operating, bylaw

enforcement and protective services, and revenue shortfalls. Safe Restart Funds were also used to offset impacts in corporate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) operations (staff costs, enhanced cleaning measures, emergency management software, and emergency support services).

Financial Implications

Safe Restart grants can be used to cover incremental costs as a result of COVID-19 and to recuperate budgeted revenue that was not collected during the pandemic. Through COVID-19, CRD services experienced increased operating costs and revenue shortfalls, where the grants were able to offset some of these impacts. The following financial plan amendments total the regional allocation:

- On December 9, 2020, the Board approved a financial plan amendment which distributed \$302,200 in grant funds of the first disbursement to the Corporate Emergency Service to cover regional corporate EOC costs incurred in 2020. (Bylaw No. 4396: 2020 to 2024 Financial Plan Bylaw, 2020, Amendment Bylaw No. 5, 2020)
- On March 24, 2021, the Board approved the final 2021 Financial Plan which included distribution of the remaining \$943,800 regional portion of the first Safe Restart Grant disbursement. The amount was distributed to Corporate Emergency Service and applied to eligible incremental expenses and lost revenue (Bylaw No. 4409: 2021 to 2025 Financial Plan Bylaw, 2021)
- On May 11, 2021, the Board approved an amendment to the 2021 Financial Plan which distributed the second Safe Restart Grant disbursement in the amount of \$250,000 to the Corporate Emergency Service. Consistent with the grant program criteria, this has been applied to eligible expenses and lost revenue resulting from COVID-19. (Bylaw No. 4421: Financial Plan Amendment No. 1, 2021)

As of July 22, 2021, the total regional grant has been allocated to initiatives as listed in Appendix A, through the internal screening and approval process.

CONCLUSION

As part of the Province's commitment to help local governments, the CRD received \$2 million in funding through the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Government. Funds were allocated to both regional and local area services. The regional grant of \$1.5 million has been fully allocated to various initiatives through ELT approvals.

RECOMMENDATION

The Finance Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grants for Local Governments – Regional Update report be received for information.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: Safe Restart Funding for Local Governments – Regional Services Projects