



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of February 27, 2020**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Date:** February 13, 2020

**From:** Paul Bruce, Fire Chief

**Subject:** Emergency Support Services Modernization

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council authorize and direct staff to apply for a grant worth up to \$25,000 through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for Emergency Support Services (ESS) modernization through equipment and training.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report seeks a Council resolution to support a City of Victoria application to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) for up to \$25,000 towards Emergency Support Service modernization equipment and training for staff and volunteers.

The CEPF is a suite of funding programs administered by UBCM and is intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments and their residents in responding to emergencies. The ESS funding stream supports the City's current emergency management needs by updating its technology equipment and associated training, needed to integrate Emergency Management BC's (EMBC) new web application for digital registration. Currently the ESS program is centered around paper processes that are inefficient. The new web application will aim to increase community capacity however, at present the City does not have the supporting technology to support the new application.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek a Council resolution to support a City of Victoria application to UBCM for up to \$25,000 that, if successful, will be used specifically for modernization initiatives of ESS through equipment and training for City staff and volunteers.

### **BACKGROUND**

Under the *Emergency Program Act (1996)*, municipalities, First Nations communities, and Regional Districts are responsible for responding to emergencies in their jurisdiction and provide Emergency Support Services where eligible.

The City of Victoria's Emergency Plan states that trained ESS volunteers provide essential services to people affected by an emergency or disaster. The primary role of ESS is to care for the needs of people evacuated as a result of an emergency.

Emergency response responsibilities include:

- Register and provide shelter, food, incidentals, and other service referrals to eligible evacuees;
- Establish ESS reception centres, group lodging centres and volunteer centres, as required;
- Request, through the EOC, mobile support from EMBC, as required;
- Obtain and coordinate ESS resources and supplies, as required;

With past emergency events, EMBC has identified a need to modernize the ESS process to increase efficiencies and are now encouraging communities across the province to begin implementing the new application and processes. At present, the City does not have the tools nor training to adopt EMBC's web application and through the CEPF, it seeks to acquire technology and supplies that can consume the application and a consultant who can provide training and exercises to City staff and volunteers using the resources in emergency response.

## **ISSUES & ANALYSIS**

Currently ESS volunteers provide many of these services through registration and referrals, which is a paper-based process that is inefficient and is susceptible to human error. However, with recent modernization from EMBC, anticipated web applications will improve capacity, efficiencies, and reduce errors. With the new web application, procurement of technology will be needed to achieve key responsibilities currently outlined in the City's Emergency Plan and Emergency Support Services Plan.

Equally important is the need to establish proper training and exercising of the new technology to ensure proficiency in the modernized processes. To ensure all City staff and volunteers are comfortable with the new technology, a portion of the requested funding is identified for a consultant to provide several training sessions followed by corresponding exercises. This will also include analysis of the integration of the proposed modernization initiatives through the development and execution of quality assurance metrics such as surveys, dialogues, and external stakeholder observations.

The City entered into a partnership with the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, with an agreement that the CRC will provide ESS activities including training, planning, response and others, on behalf of the City. In alignment to this agreement, the CRC is fully aware and supportive of this application, understanding that if successful, the funds will be granted to the City and the CRC will have access to the resources for their contracted activities.

## OPTIONS & IMPACTS

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

The current financial plan allocates funding for the emergency program which includes Emergency Support Services. This project is eligible for up to \$25,000 of grant funding from UBCM, which will assist us in developing a stronger ESS program and capacity. If successful, this \$25,000 would be added to the budget with offsetting funding from this grant.

### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

Emergency Management activities align with the Official Community Plan goals outlined in Section 18 – Emergency Management:

- Victoria is prepared to deal with known hazards and emerging threats, to limit the adverse impacts of events, and effectively manage emergencies;
- Victoria is able to respond rapidly and effectively to all emergencies, including events with long-term impacts and recovery times; and
- Victorians can rely on significant local sources for food, energy and materials to meet daily needs under emergency conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The proposed Emergency Support Services modernization initiative will ensure that the City is capable to use the new Provincial web application to increase efficiencies and capacity when providing response services to the residents.

Respectfully submitted,



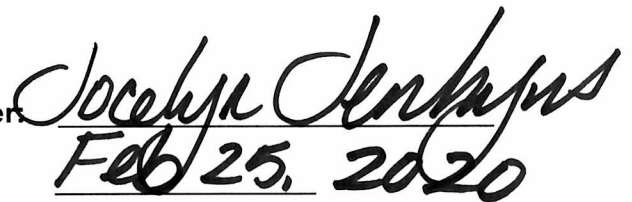
Tanya Patterson  
Emergency Program Coordinator



Paul Bruce  
Fire Chief

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

Date:

  
Feb 25, 2020

### List of Attachments

- Appendix A - Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Emergency Support Services 2020 Application Form
- Appendix B - Statement of 2020 ESS Modernization Expenditures, City of Victoria