



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of Nov 10, 2022

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** November 2, 2022
From: Daniel Atkinson, Acting Fire Chief
Subject: Extreme Weather Response Plan Funding

RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement, the *Extreme Weather Response Program Services Agreement*, with BC Housing, on the terms satisfactory to the Fire Chief and in the form satisfactory to the City Solicitor and that the resolution be forwarded to the daytime Council Meeting of November 10, 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BC Housing is responsible for funding overnight Emergency Weather Response sites but does not provide funding for the activation of daytime warming centres. During the winter of 2021-2022, the City of Victoria was reimbursed for expenses incurred as a result of activating both daytime, and overnight, warming centres through an approved task number and Expenditure Authorization Form (EAF) from EMBC.

EMBC has advised that because funding is available through BC Housing for activation of overnight Extreme Weather Response (EWR) centres, EMBC will only reimburse the city for expenses that are incurred resulting from daytime activations; they will no longer fund nighttime warming centre activations. To access the funding available from BC Housing for activation of overnight warming centres, a formal agreement with BC Housing is required.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council regarding changes to the funding available for activation of EWR / warming centres and to seek council authorization to enter an agreement with BC Housing, the "*Extreme Weather Response Program Services Agreement*," to access funding for nighttime warming centres during periods of extreme or prolonged cold weather.

BACKGROUND

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program funds community-based services to provide extra emergency shelter spaces during periods of winter weather which threaten the health and safety of individuals who are Absolute Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness. EWR is designed to fund time-limited, temporary shelter spaces in communities where there is not sufficient

emergency shelter capacity during the winter season. It does not provide funding for shelter spaces outside of winter weather related emergencies.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

BC Housing's EWR program only funds night-time extreme weather shelters (not daytime warming centres). BC Housing does not operate EWR or warming centres, but rather they fund community service providers who are able to activate these services. EMBC advised last season that since BC Housing funds overnight shelters, the City of Victoria should seek funding through BC Housing rather than EMBC for overnight operations. EMBC will accept and approve Expenditure Authorizations Forms (EAFs) with an approved task number, submitted for extreme weather response costs which are not funded through BC Housing, where the expenditure is required for the health and safety of the community during an emergency event, such as daytime warming centres. BC Housing generally funds 12 hour overnight extreme weather shelter operations including staffing, volunteer appreciation, cleaning, food, bus tickets, laundry, and first aid supplies. They generally do not fund capital, start-up costs, insurance, administration, cots, mats, blankets, or rental/lease costs. The funding is an invoice-based payment meaning the City of Victoria would submit nightly invoices to BC Housing and be reimbursed based on an approved nightly budget. The City of Victoria owns cots, mats, blankets, and the supplies required for the operation of warming centres as they were previously purchased for the winter of 2021-2022 activations.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1: Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the "Extreme Weather Response Program Services Agreement" with BC Housing and forward the resolution to the daytime council meeting on November 10, 2022. **(Recommended)**

Option 2: That Council does not authorize the agreement with BC Housing.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The City of Victoria Extreme Weather Warming and Cooling Centre Plan was developed in 2021 through consultation with local faith-based organizations and community groups. For each potential location, a comprehensive checklist was created identifying what services may be provided as well as any accessibility considerations including wheelchair accessibility and access to secured storage for personal belongings.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

This project aligns with the City of Victoria's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan objective of Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City. Collaborating with regional partners, GeoBC, and EMBC and creating resources that will support emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery aligns with strategic objective one: Good Governance and Civic Engagement.

This report and its directions are aligned with Strategic Objective 6: Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship and specifically the implementation of the City's Climate Leadership Plan.

Impacts to Financial Plan

A draft budget of projected operating costs for the activation of an overnight warming centre has been calculated at \$2165.80 and it is projected that 10 - 15 activations may be required this winter for a total cost between \$21,658.00 and \$32,487.00. A nightly budget is agreed upon by the City and BC Housing; this amount is not based on the number of warming centre guests present or who utilize the service. If costs are less than what is outlined in the budget, then the City keeps the extra funding and uses these funds for other warming centre/EWR costs such as extra supplies. If the budget does not cover actual costs, then the city is responsible for any unforeseen costs that may occur. Examples are requirements for additional staff or maintenance and repairs.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Patterson
Emergency Program Coordinator

Daniel Atkinson
Acting Fire Chief

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager