



## BACKGROUND

British Columbians forced from their homes by fire, floods, earthquakes or other emergencies may receive emergency social services for up to 72 hours. Services may include food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, information about the crisis, and family reunification. There may also be special services like first aid, child minding, pet care and transportation.

Under the Emergency Program Act, municipalities, First Nations communities and regional districts are responsible for responding to emergencies in their areas, including providing emergency social services.

They often depend on volunteers to plan and provide these services, including:

- Identifying locations for reception centres and group lodging;
- Finding other volunteers;
- Working with local businesses, service organizations and government agencies;
- Housing and feeding people forced from their homes;
- Providing services to people who are unable to leave their homes; and
- Supporting other emergency responders.

Each year about 5,000 British Columbians volunteer as emergency social service workers. Approximately 65,000 people were forced from their homes this summer as wildfires scorched more than 12,000 square kilometers. These evacuees were assisted by Emergency Social Services staff and volunteers from across the Province, including Victoria.

Building local and regional capacity in Emergency Social Services is extremely important, as witnessed by recent flooding and wildfire events in British Columbia.

Staff recognize the need to look beyond traditional Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) training courses and community Emergency Social Services volunteers in order to prepare for large localized events such as apartment fires as well as regional disasters.

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding programs intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments and their residents in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. CEPF was announced as part of an \$80 million announcement from the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure

## ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The proposed project will consist of recruitment of new volunteers, cross training between Victoria Ready volunteer teams, and training for City staff (particularly recreation and facilities staff). This will include the development of online training modules in Emergency Social Services, convergent volunteer / "just in time" training, and culminate in a training exercise which includes setting up reception and group lodging centres.

One of our current challenges is the time it takes to complete the JIBC training courses and fitting these into the busy schedules of staff and volunteers. The online training modules will provide staff and volunteers with “bite size” training they can take in their own time.

Training would be designed by a consultant who would work with the City of Victoria’s Emergency Management division ensuring consistency with Emergency Management BC’s (EMBC) Emergency Social Services Program standards.

## **OPTIONS & IMPACTS**

Option 1: Support the City of Victoria’s application for \$25,000 in grant funds through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (Recommended).

Option 2: That Council decline the endorsement of the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund application.

### **2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan**

Objectives are consistent with and compliment the 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan objectives, specifically to:

- innovate and lead through internal city planning as well as community programs;
- engage and empower the community through our neighbourhood, volunteer, and education programs;
- facilitate social inclusion and community wellness by consulting with key stakeholders such as the Disability Alliance of BC (DABC) and using the functional needs framework for activities that promote community resilience; and
- Plan for emergencies including climate change short and long-term, by taking an all-hazards approach.

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

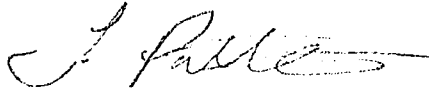
The current financial plan allocates funding for the emergency program which includes Emergency Social Services. This project is eligible for up to \$25,000 of grant funding from UBCM, which will assist us in developing a stronger Emergency Social Services program. If successful, this \$25,000 would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

### *Official Community Plan Consistency Statement*

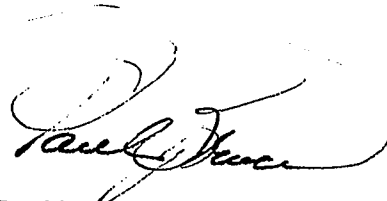
Emergency Management activities align with the Official Community Plan goals outlined in Section 18 – Emergency Management:

- 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.

Respectfully submitted,

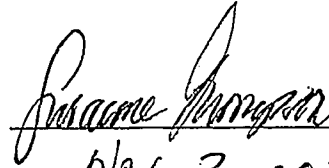


Tanya Patterson  
Emergency Program Coordinator



Paul Bruce  
Fire Chief

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date:

Nov 3, 2017

**List of Attachments**

Appendix A – 2017 ESS Program & Application Guide