

Report

Date September 26, 2023
Subject Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Grant Application

File:

PURPOSE

To request approval to apply to the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) grant program under the Volunteer & Composite Fire Department Training & Equipment funding stream for Wildland Personal Protective Equipment.

BACKGROUND

The CEPF is a group of funding programs intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments, First Nations, and communities in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of B.C. and is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities.

The Volunteer & Composite Fire Department's Equipment & Training funding Firefighter safety and stream can contribute a maximum of 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$30,000.

This funding stream intends to build the resiliency of volunteer Paid on Call and composite fire departments in preparing for and responding to emergencies through purchasing new or replacement equipment and facilitating training delivery. Ongoing operational costs and the purchase of major fire apparatus are not eligible.

DISCUSSION

Firefighter safety, increasing standards, and the unprecedented wildfire activity in the province have served as an alert to structural fire services that the need for wildland firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) is most important.

Day-to-day structural firefighting PPE (e.g., helmets, coats, pants, boots, and gloves) protects the firefighter from the thermal stresses associated with interior structural firefighting. Those design features make PPE less desirable during wildland firefighting operations, where one of the primary health threats to a firefighter is heat stress from a high level of physical exertion during hot and dry conditions.

Two-piece wildland Nomex (shirt, pants) and the associated equipment address firefighters' PPE needs during wildland firefighting in the wildland-urban interface. This PPE balances protection against burn injuries and comfort for the wearer. Often, wildfire events can occur over many hours or days with a lot of strenuous work.

In 2022, the North Cowichan Fire Department purchased the enhanced wildland Nomex PPE for the bulk of the firefighting force, using the previous year's deployment earnings. To close the gap and complete the equipping of all North Cowichan firefighters with PPE, the fire department wants to apply for the CEPF grant to fund all associated PPE equipment.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council authorize an application for a grant in the amount of \$30,000 under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund's Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training funding stream for Wildland Personal Protective Equipment and associated costs for the North Cowichan Fire Department.

IMPLICATIONS

Employers have responsibilities under WorkSafeBC to provide and enforce the use of appropriate PPE in the workplace. While we were able to purchase much of this equipment in 2022, grant funding would allow for the remaining equipment to be purchased.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council authorize an application for a grant in the amount of \$30,000 under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund grant program under the Volunteer & Composite Fire Department Training & Equipment funding stream for Wildland Personal Protective Equipment.

Report prepared by:



Jason deJong
Assistant Fire Chief

Report reviewed by:



Ron French
Interim Fire Chief

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer