

Report

Date October 2, 2024
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 and Composite Fire Department Equipment and Training 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 BC and is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).

The Volunteer and Composite Fire Department Equipment and Training funding firefighter safety and stream can contribute a maximum of 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$40,000.

This funding stream intends to build the resiliency of volunteer Paid On-Call and composite fire departments in preparing for and responding to emergencies by 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) and wildland firefighting equipment (pumps) is 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.

Wildland helmets and the associated equipment address firefighters' PPE needs during wildland firefighting in the wildland-urban interface. These helmets are designed for wildland and forestry firefighting conditions while offering safe protection against mechanical hazards, allowing for the integration of protective goggles and headlamps as well as additional comfort for the wearer. Often, wildfire events can occur over many hours or days with a lot of strenuous work.

The portable pumps are more lightweight, can deliver water from remote, un-hydrated areas, and are used for grass fires, forest fires, or stand-by protection of structures requiring high pressure or high volumes of water. The portable water pumps can also distribute water from natural environmental sources such as creeks, rivers, lakes, or storage tanks.

North Cowichan has an older, low quantity of portable pumps in its inventory.

Options:

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council authorize an application for a grant in the amount of \$40,000 under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund's Volunteer & Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training funding stream for Wildland Personal Protective Equipment and Wildland firefighting equipment (pumps) for the North Cowichan Fire Department.
2. THAT Council direct staff to report back with alternative projects/proposals for Council's consideration for a grant application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities' Community Emergency Preparedness Fund under the Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training 2024.

IMPLICATIONS

Employers have responsibilities under WorkSafeBC to provide and enforce the use of appropriate PPE in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION


THAT Council authorize an application for a grant in the amount of \$40,000 under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) grant program under the Volunteer and Composite Fire Department Equipment and Training funding stream for Wildland Personal Protective Equipment and Wildland Fire Fighting equipment.

Report prepared by:

Jason deJong

Jason deJong
Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Inspections

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer