



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 7320-20

From: Kurt MacDonald, Fire Chief

Date: September 25 2024

Subject: 2024 Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training – Grant Application

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund grant program and seek a resolution approving the application for the Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training grant to purchase portable radio equipment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding programs intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments, First Nations, and communities in responding to emergencies through funding provided by the Province of BC and administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). This report seeks a resolution from Council to grant funding application for 2024 Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training to replace our portable radios on two of our fire apparatus.

DISCUSSION:

Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a funding initiative in British Columbia aimed at enhancing the capacity of local governments, First Nations, and community groups to plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. The primary goals of the CEPF are to strengthen local preparedness and response, enhance mitigation efforts, promote collaboration, and support recovery and resilience.

Applying for the Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training grant to replace aging portable radio equipment would benefit the fire department and the broader community in several ways:

1. Enhanced Communication and Coordination

- **Improved Communication in Emergencies:** Reliable portable radios ensure clear, uninterrupted communication between firefighters, command centers, and mutual aid partners during emergencies. This is essential for effective coordination, especially in wildfire or large-scale emergency responses where multiple agencies are involved.
- **Provincial Frequency Compatibility:** Since our department participates in provincial wildfire deployments and requires radios that can hold all necessary frequencies, new radios would ensure seamless communication across different jurisdictions, preventing any gaps or miscommunication during critical moments.

2. Increased Safety for Firefighters

- **Upgraded Technology:** New radios typically come with advanced safety features, such as better range, noise cancellation, and emergency alert functions. These upgrades enhance the safety of

firefighters by providing better situational awareness and quicker responses to changing conditions.

- **Reliable Performance in Harsh Conditions:** Aging equipment may fail under extreme weather or emergency conditions. Replacing radios with modern, durable units helps ensure that communication lines remain open, reducing risks to both firefighters and the community.

3. Cost Savings and Efficiency

- **Reduced Maintenance Costs:** Old equipment often requires frequent repairs, which can be costly and time-consuming. By replacing aging radios, the department would reduce maintenance costs, freeing up resources for other critical needs.

4. Alignment with Mutual Aid Partners

- **Better Integration with Mutual Aid Partners:** Since we work closely with mutual aid partners across the region, having compatible and modern radio equipment ensures smoother collaboration. This enhances regional emergency response capabilities and ensures your department can assist and receive help efficiently in larger-scale incidents.

By securing this grant, the fire department can modernize critical communications infrastructure, improve safety for personnel, and enhance the overall preparedness and resilience of the community in the face of emergencies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The grant funding request is in the amount of \$23,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

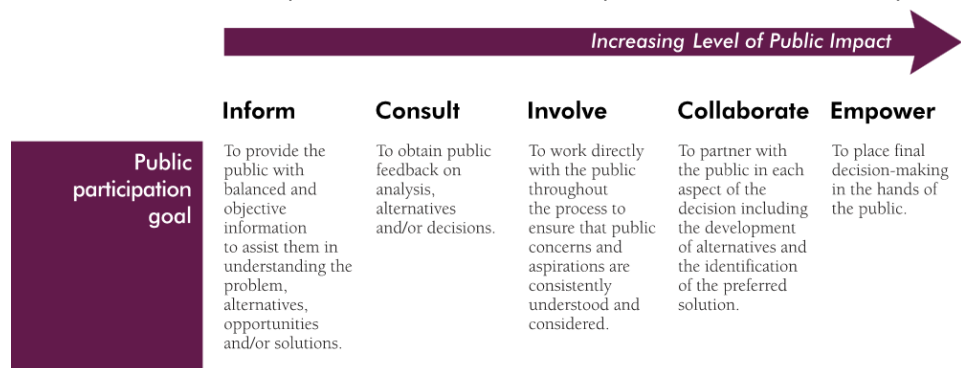
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Public Safety - Build capacity for emergency planning and local response

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT based on the September 25, 2024 staff report “2024 Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training – Grant Application”, Council approves OPTION 1 and authorize an application made to the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for \$23,000 to be used in 2025 to purchase portable radio equipment.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Prepared by: Kurt MacDonald, Fire Chief

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.P.I., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)