



REPORT

To: Rural Budgets Administration Committee

Report Number: FN-RBAC-114

From: Teri Vetter, Chief Financial Officer

Date: November 25, 2021

Subject: Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee recommend that the Regional Board adopt the Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid Policy, which sets out the principles and guidelines governing the issuance of PRRD grant funding to support community led projects or initiatives that service or benefit rural communities and fall outside the regular service functions of the PRRD, as administered by the Rural Budgets Administration Committee.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

In alignment with the PRRD Strategic Plan, a comprehensive review of the Rural Budgets Administration Committee (RBAC) Funding Policies booklet, comprised of some formal policies, and other additional guidelines the Committee routinely followed and were included in the booklet for convenience, was launched. The RBAC Funding Policies booklet was approved by RBAC in 2014, to assist staff and Directors with funding decisions, as a 'one stop shop' for information regarding grant policies and guidelines.

The various RBAC Funding Policies were written to assist RBAC in their decision making process for the award of grants to support improvements and increase programs and services for those communities located in the rural areas of the PRRD. The RBAC Funding Policies booklet, in its current form, functions as a large multiple page manual that contains various guidelines for a number of different grant funding options that is not user friendly, easy to follow or interpret. In an effort to streamline this document, enhance and clarify for staff and RBAC consistency around grant administration, and to make it easier for potential grant applicants to understand the eligibility, application, and reporting requirements, four new policies have been created based on the information contained in the existing RBAC Funding Policies booklet. These new policies are consistent with and reflective of local government legislative requirements and best practices. This report provides information on the new Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid policy.

This new Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid policy establishes guidelines to assist RBAC in the award of grant contributions to eligible organizations to assist with community led projects or initiatives that fall outside the regular service functions, and serve or benefit the rural communities of the Peace River Regional District. The policy contains clear and concise information for all readers and is written in the appropriate formatting style that is consistent with other grant policies. In addition to providing a purpose, scope and definitions, the policy section of the document outlines the principles, applicant criteria, how to apply and payment of funds.

Key components of the policy are noted below:

- Addition of multi-year grants and reporting requirements
- Increased maximum of \$75,000 (from \$50,000) for grants awarded to support operations for more than three years be considered for a service function
- Grants for the purpose of capital projects, not owned by the PRRD, may require a Service Partnership agreement between the recipient organization and the PRRD
- Guidelines for Fire Equipment, Fire Hall Construction or Renovation, and Fire Trucks were combined to create one section for Fire Services related grants
- Increase from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for grants awarded to support feasibility studies
- Increase from \$30,000 to \$50,000 for grants awarded to support rural capital grants
- Removal of the obsolete guidelines for grants to support Fringe Area projects, Joint Ventures, Recreational and Cultural projects, Seniors Housing, Sewer and Water Extension Services, Telephone Services and Water Wells/Springs for Public Use.
- Inclusion of the previously separate guidelines applicable to Feasibility Studies, Fixed Capital Equipment (renamed as Rural Capital Grants), and Parent Advisory Councils, into the Electoral Area Grant in Aid Policy.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Organizational Effectiveness
- Comprehensive Policy Review

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid contributions may be provided from either the Fair Share, Peace River Agreement, or BCR/PRA Reserve Funds as chosen by each Electoral Area Director.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

Once the Regional Board approves the Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid policy, it will be posted on the PRRD website.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Upon the approval of the Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid policy, the existing rural grant application will be updated by staff to ensure it aligns with the information that is reflected in the new adopted policy.

In the RBAC Funding Policies booklet, the following pages have been incorporated into the Electoral Area Grant in Aid Policy:

Feasibility Study Fund

Fire Equipment – Minor Capital Projects, Rural Fire Hall Construction or Renovation, Fire Trucks, (combined into Fire Services)

Fixed Capital Equipment (renamed Rural Capital Grants)

Additionally, the following pages from the RBAC Funding Policies Booklet have either been covered by the new overarching Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid policy, or deemed obsolete and no longer required, and therefore the information was intentionally not included in the new policy:

Fringe Area Funding Joint Ventures, Recreational and Culture Grants, Seniors Housing, Sewer and Water Extension Services, Telephone Service, Animals, and Water Wells/Springs for Public Use.

Some but not all of these pages indicate an “adopted” date, therefore some are assumed to be guidelines adopted by RBAC to self-govern their determinations, (RBAC approved the entire booklet in March of 2014), while some were Board approved as policies to be followed by RBAC in the administration of the various funds and budgets delegated to the Committee via Bylaw 1166, 1998 (such as Gas Tax and Peace River Agreement funds).

In any event, the pages listed above, and in fact the entire RBAC Funding Policies Booklet will be considered repealed and obsolete upon Board adoption of the four new policies written to replace the booklet in its entirety.

Attachments:

1. Final Draft - Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid Policy

External Links:

1. [Rural Budgets Administrative Committee Funding Policies](#)