



# REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-030

From: David Sturgeon, Protective Services Manager

Date: January 28, 2021

**Subject: Emergency Operations Centre Grant Application**

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## **RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]**

That the Regional Board authorize the submission of a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for \$18,500 to purchase two portable radios and one SmartBoard for the Emergency Operations Centre.

## **BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

The intent of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Emergency Preparedness Funding (CEPF) stream is to support eligible applicants to build local capacity through the purchase of equipment and supplies required to maintain or improve Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). The deadline for the grant application is March 26, 2021, and if successful, it would cover 100% of the cost.

The \$18,500 would be used to purchase two portable radios at approximately \$4,000 for the Dawson Creek EOC, and one SmartBoard at approximately \$14,500 to be utilized at the Charlie Lake Fire Department as an alternate EOC site.

### **Portable Radios:**

Current communications between PRRD staff, Incident Command, and the EOC are limited within the PRRD. The EOC traditionally relies on cellular phones as the primary communications device with the Incident Command Post (ICP) during emergency operations. While this works under normal conditions, there are areas where radio communications may work better. Traditional communications on an emergency scene run entirely through the Dispatch Centre utilizing VHF radio technology. The reliance on a single form of communication can cause a delay in the transmission of information and may present a safety risk to responders in the event that information cannot be conveyed in a timely manner. A recent example of this was a tanker fire near Taylor when PRRD staff had to wait over an hour to get information back from the Incident Commander (IC) on the scene to perform a public safety notification.

The purchase of two VHF handheld radios programmed to work on the existing emergency radio networks would help alleviate this issue by giving the EOC another communications channel to use in the event of an emergency. Existing radio technology in the Dispatch Centre allows them to “patch through” across multiple channels to ensure communications can be completed when radio signals are decreased. The inclusion of VHF radio technology into the EOC will also satisfy the WorkSafeBC requirements surrounding dual communications devices for work in hazards locations.

Note that PRRD Protective Services staff have extensive experience operating and maintaining portable radios due to their many years' experience as first responders.

**SmartBoard:**

In 2017 and 2018 two SmartBoards were purchased for the EOC site in Dawson Creek as a result of funding from CEPF. This third SmartBoard would be used at the Charlie Lake Fire Hall and be utilized in the event that an alternate EOC site is needed.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

1. That the Regional Board decline the submission of a grant application, to the Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund, for \$18,500 to purchase equipment for the Emergency Operations Centre.
2. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

**STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**

- ☒ Responsive Service Delivery
- ☒ Enhance Emergency Planning and Response Capacity

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):**

The handheld radio purchase is budgeted for \$4,000 in function 300 Emergency Services, if successful in this grant application, the \$4,000 will not be spent from this budget.

The SmartBoard budget is \$14,500. The SmartBoard will only be purchased in the event that this grant application is approved.

**COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):**

None at this time.

**OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):**

None at this time.