



REPORT

To: Rural Budgets Administration Committee

Report Number: FN-RBAC-060

From: Teri Vetter, Chief Financial Officer

Date: February 18, 2021

Subject: COVID-19 Safe Re-Start Grant

RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of 2020 PRRD costs associated with safety protocols implemented due to COVID-19 in the amount of \$75,755 from the COVID Reserve Fund.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On the December 11, 2020, the Regional Board made the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED, and CARRIED

That the Regional Board establish a reserve fund for the COVID 19 Safe Restart Grant in the amount of \$700,000 received by the PRRD from the Province of BC; further, that a report be provided to a future Rural Budgets Administration Committee outlining options and guidelines for spending of the funds from the reserve, for current and future costs related to the pandemic; and finally, that the Board amend Bylaw 1166, 1998 to delegate administration of the COVID reserve fund, once established, to the Rural Budgets Administration Committee.

Usage of the COVID-19 Safe Re-Start grant has the following Provincial Guidelines:

- establishment of a reserve fund to address ongoing pandemic costs (confirmed by staff with the Ministry)
- addressing revenue shortfalls for both services operated by the PRRD, facilities that the PRRD owns and facilities that have PRRD service functions
- facility reopening costs such as Plexiglas, cleaners, sanitizers, COVID Safety Plan development, etc.
- additional staffing or increased staffing or human resources costs as a result of COVID-19
- emergency planning and response costs
- computer and other electronic technology costs

Funds cannot be used for new capital projects that are not directly related to COVID-19 response or restart costs.

The Peace River Regional District has implemented many safety measures including plexiglass dividers in all offices and Board room, sanitizers, additional cleaning products, additional janitorial costs to ensure all surfaces are disinfected, and additional technology to allow staff to work from home as well as virtual meetings due to no public gatherings. This needed to be completed in order for our local government to carry on doing business and the costs associated in 2020 are \$75,755.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

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

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☐ Advocacy
- ☒ Emergency Response Capacity for Local Governments

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The Regional District received \$700,000 from the Province of BC for the COVID-19 Safe Re-Start grant. A reserve fund has been created and the balance as of December 31, 2020 was \$700,000.

If approved, the \$75,755 will be reimbursed to the Administration function in 2020 where all the costs have been expensed.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

\$25,000 is anticipated to be incurred for the PRRD in 2021. Other possible allocations for the remainder of the funds could be:

- Online platform for a virtual EOC
- A portion of the remaining funds allocated to rural community groups to pay for retrofits as a result of COVID, the development of a COVID Safety plan or operating costs as a result of the loss of revenue sources (e.g., insurance, hydro, gas, etc.)
- Election costs as a result of COVID
- Allocation of funds to functions that are likely going to see reduced revenue in 2021

Attachments:

1. COVID Safe Start Grant Allocation