



REPORT

To: Rural Budgets Administration Committee

Report Number: FN-RBAC-076

From: Teri Vetter, Chief Financial Officer

Date: April 22, 2021

Subject: COVID-19 Safe Re-Start Grant Funding

RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee allocate 20% of the COVID Reserve Fund (\$216,800) for grants to nonprofit organizations within the rural areas that have incurred revenue shortfalls or other related costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee allocate 20% of the COVID Reserve Fund (\$216,800) for unknown expenses in 2022 related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee commit to the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with COVID Supplies and Retrofits implemented due to COVID-19 in the amount of \$16,901 from the COVID Reserve Fund, further that it be payable upon production of receipts.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with Public Engagement processes implemented due to COVID-19 in the amount of \$123,500 from the COVID Reserve Fund, further that it be payable upon production of receipts.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with Information Technology equipment, licenses and upgrades due to COVID-19 in the amount of \$126,317 from the COVID Reserve Fund, further that it be payable upon production of receipts.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with public referendums in the amount of \$82,500 from the COVID Reserve Fund, further that it be payable upon production of receipts.

RECOMMENDATION #7:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with additional staffing for a Project Manager to assist with all capital projects that are behind due to COVID-19, in the amount of \$65,000 from the COVID Reserve Fund.

RECOMMENDATION #8:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with additional staffing for a term Health and Safety Coordinator to ensure that the PRRD has up-to-date safety protocols and all health and safety measures are up to Provincial and WCB standards, in the amount of \$64,085 from the COVID Reserve Fund.

RECOMMENDATION #9:

That the Rural Budgets Administration Committee authorize the reimbursement of the estimated 2021 PRRD costs associated with a Contract Communications Support Coordinator to assist with public engagement for referendums and service expansions, in the amount of \$50,000 from the COVID Reserve Fund, further that it be payable upon production of receipts.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

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

- additional staffing or increased staffing or human resources costs as a result of COVID-19
- 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.
- emergency planning and response costs
- computer and other electronic technology costs
- services for vulnerable persons (e.g. persons living with disabilities, mental illness or addictions, persons experiencing homelessness or other vulnerabilities)

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

Recommendation #2 – 2022 COVID Fund Reserves

This allocation is ensuring that the PRRD has the funds to adequately cover any additional costs associated with COVID-19 in 2022, thus reducing the possibility of increasing requisitions to cover budgeted costs.

Recommendation #3 – 2021 COVID Supply & Cleaning Costs

These estimated costs include cleaning contracts for both Charlie Lake Fire Department and PRRD offices and warehouse and COVID-19 supplies that are required to ensure that the PRRD is following all health and safety protocols implemented from the Province.

COVID Supplies & Retrofits		
Item Name	Description/Purpose	Funds Anticipated 2021
Cleaning contract CLFD	Additional cleaning measures for CLFD	\$ 6,000
COVID-19 Supplies	Access Masks	\$ 1,163.46
Charlie Lake Fire Department	Safety Equipment / Supplies - Fire Department	\$ 2,100
Charlie Lake Fire Department	Covid Supplies - Masks, Safety Glasses	\$ 1,638
Regional Park	Park Closure Supplies	\$ 6,000
Cleaning contract for PRRD	Additional cleaning required at the warehouse and offices \$500/month	
		\$ 16,901

Recommendation #4 – Public Engagement

These estimated costs include Public Engagement for Solid Waste, Volunteer Recruitment, additional website upgrades, advertising costs and photography to build an image bank; public reliance on technology during COVID-19 is increasing and we need to stay up-to-date keeping the public engaged and informed.

Public Engagement		
Item Name	Description	Funds Anticipated 2021
Solid Waste Management Plan Public Engagement	Reformed Public Consultation Process for RSWMP Review	\$ 13,500
Volunteer Recruitment Video & Advertising	Produce a volunteer recruitment video as we cannot hold open houses, there is minimal ways to recruit volunteers / Increase advertising for 2021	\$ 20,000
Website upgrades	Upgrades to website to assist with online public engagement	\$ 20,000
Public Engagement	Bang the Table Online Engagement Platform	\$ 15,000
Public Engagement	Advertising via newspaper, radio, TV (reaching out to residents/stakeholders, creating awareness, getting community input, registration campaign for NE BC alerts)	\$ 40,000
Public Engagement	Photography to build image bank (for social media, advertising, website redevelopment)	\$ 15,000
		\$ 123,500

Recommendation #5 – IT Equipment & Software

These estimated costs include IT equipment and software that is vital to carrying on day-to-day service delivery in the COVID-19 pandemic such as Remote access VPN, video conferencing, additional webcams, Board room audio and video equipment and D4H Platform for a virtual EOC.

IT Costs		
Item Name	Description	Funds Anticipated 2021
VPN Licensing	Remote Access VPN (WFH)	\$ 1,125
Zoom Licensing	Video Conferencing (Board Meetings, WFH)	\$ 7,606
Digital EOC	D4H Platform for virtual EOC (will also be used in the future when operating EOC on-site)	\$ 8,500
Board Room Audio/Visual	New audio/video system for Board meetings	\$ 100,000
IT upgrades	Additional Webcams/Audio Headsets with Microphones	\$ 4,384
IT upgrades	Mobile Speakerphones for audio/Zoom conferencing	\$ 2,019
IT upgrades	Additional monitors for staff	\$ 2,683
		\$ 126,317

Recommendation #6 – Referendum Costs

These estimated costs include all the staffing, meals, additional costs for screening, cleaning and ensuring COVID-19 protocols are being followed, hall rentals if permitted, cleaning expenses for before and after election, barriers between election staff and public, postage, and the like. This is based on costs from Dawson Creek's bi-election which was approximately \$7,500 per day.

Recommendation #7 – Capital Project Manager

This cost is to hire a term Capital Project Manager to assist all departments with capital projects for the remainder of 2021. Due to COVID-19 a number of projects were stalled and are now moving forward or anticipated to move forward. The Capital Project Manager will act as the “owners” representative and coordinate with the qualified contracted firms (or volunteers) for these projects. Although they may not lead each project, they will provide valuable technical support to staff and provide capital project oversight – “in-house quality assurance.” Typically Capital Project Managers have an engineering background, experience project management and capital construction. The potential projects that this position would provide support for include:

- 1) Chetwynd Library
- 2) Osborn Community Hall Replacement
- 3) Kelly Lake Community Hall Renovation (if grant approved)
- 4) Prespatou Trail
- 5) Wonowon Trail
- 6) NPRL Phase 1 Closure
- 7) Capital repairs for sewer systems
- 8) Transfer station construction

Recommendation #8 – Health & Safety Coordinator

This cost is to hire a term Health and Safety Coordinator to oversee PRRD health and safety requirements for the remainder of 2021. Due to COVID-19 staff have spent significant time developing, revising and updating COVID Safety plans, processes and controls for the organization. This has resulted in other work not being completed. This position could also assist in conducting an audit of the PRRD’s Health and Safety Program and develop and plan to develop and update standard operating guidelines, policies and procedures. Further the Coordinator could assist rural community groups to develop and/or update their COVID Safety Plans, thus allowing them to operate once again and start generating revenue to support their facilities.

Recommendation #9 – Contract Communications Support

This cost is to contract additional communications support in 2021. Due to the number of referendums, expansion projects and large projects requiring public engagement, this contract “as and when” position would assist the communications team with graphic design, content development, social media, advertising, etc. in addition to regular annual public education campaigns like Emergency Preparedness week. Some of these projects include:

1. Charlie Lake Fire Expansion
2. Dawson Creek Fire Expansion
3. Chetwynd Fire Expansion
4. Moberly Lake Fire Transition
5. Chetwynd Library Construction
6. Gotta Go
7. Seniors Aging in Place
8. Health Related Services GIA
9. Osborn Community Hall Replacement
10. Connecting Communities Trails Projects
11. Solid Waste Management Plan
12. Wonowon Trail

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

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

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Review and Amend Solid Waste Management Plan
- ☒ Enhance Emergency Planning and Response Capacity
- ☒ Emergency Response Capacity for Local Governments

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

In November 2020, the Regional District received \$700,000 for the COVID Safe Re-Start grant. An additional \$384,000 was given in March 2021 for a total of \$1,084,000. \$75,775 has been reimbursed to Function 100 – Administration for costs incurred in 2020. As of March 31, 2021, the COVID Reserve fund balance is \$1,009,299.06. If all recommendations are approved, the balance of the reserve would be \$46,322.00.

Item	Amount
Non-Profit Grants	\$ 216,800.00
2022 COVID costs	\$ 216,800.00
2021 COVID supplies	\$ 16,901.00
Public Engagement	\$ 123,500.00
IT costs	\$ 126,317.00
Staffing (2021 only)	\$ 261,585.00
	<u>\$ 961,903.00</u>
 TOTAL Fund	 \$ 1,084,000.00
Less 2020 costs	\$ (75,775.00)
Less recommended	\$ (961,903.00)
	<u>\$ 46,322.00</u>

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Anticipated 2022 costs as a result of the pandemic:

- Vehicle costs = \$15,000
- Field Services wages from 2020 = \$100,000