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Item No. 21.2
Halifax Regional Council
December 3, 2024

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 23, 2024

SUBJECT: **Procedures for Application to the Municipal Registry of Volunteer
Emergency Services Providers: Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

September 10, 2023 – Item 15.1.9

Moved by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT Halifax Regional Council approve

1. Minor amendments to Section 13 of Administrative Order 2014-018-ADM included as Attachment 1 and Attachment 2 of the staff report dated August 27, 2024; and
2. The award of four (4) Operating Grants as listed in Table 1 of the Discussion section of the staff report dated August 22, 2024, for a combined total of \$199,864.78 from Operating Account C801-8004.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the September 10, 2024, meeting of Regional Council a report regarding Operating Grants to registered volunteer ground search and rescue teams/EMO organizations elicited a request that the “Saint Margaret’s Bay Marine Rescue Society be considered an essential search and rescue emergency services provider”. Although not a formal motion of the Council, a request to consider the addition of a named organization could create an expectation outside the formal registration and approval process. This information report briefly describes the application process for the Municipal Registry of Emergency Services Providers in accordance with current legislation and Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM.

BACKGROUND

All levels of government engage volunteers to enhance a coordinated response to natural and human-induced disasters, evacuation and refuge, searches, communications, and to aid citizens adversely impacted by such events. Discretionary municipal grants to EMO organizations are contingent upon acceptance of a nonprofit or charitable organization in HRM's Registry of Emergency Services Providers in accordance with the criteria set out in Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM. To date, HRM has entered into formal agreements with four (4) volunteer ground search and rescue teams and two (2) amateur radio clubs. These organizations are listed in Appendix A of the Administrative Order.

DISCUSSION

HRM Registry of Emergency Services Providers

To be considered for addition to HRM's Registry of Emergency Services Providers ("the Registry") a registered non-profit or charitable organization must make formal application to the Municipality through HRM's Community Safety department. Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM sets out the minimum eligibility requirements, registration procedures, and the evaluation process. If, upon receipt of the required documentation and staff review, HRM Community Safety recommend that Regional Council approve the addition of the St. Margaret's Bay Marine Search and Rescue Society in Appendix A of the registry, amendments to the Administrative Order will be required, including, but not limited to the following:

- Amend Section 2 Interpretation to add an operational definition of "Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue".
- Amend Section 2 Eligibility to add volunteer marine search and rescue to subsection (c).
- Amend Appendix A Municipally Registered Emergency Services providers to add sub-category number 3. Marine Search and Rescue Organizations.
- Other housekeeping amendments, as applicable.

Acceptance into the Registry does not constitute a commitment to provide operating or project-specific cash grants or in-kind assistance. Further, the type and level of assistance provided to groups listed in the Registry is expected to vary on a case-by-case basis. Notwithstanding these provisions formal registration may provide mutual benefit.

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Maritimes)

The Canadian Coast Guard is an agency of the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The agency has a role in maritime security, navigation and communications, environmental monitoring, and marine safety. Given the extent of Canada's coastline and a limited number of government search and rescue facilities there has been an increasing reliance on volunteer services to assist in a coordinated and timely response to an emergency and access to remote coastal areas. In 1978, local volunteers organized themselves to serve a defined area using their own vessels and operated out of local commercial or government wharves, marinas, sailing clubs, and private docks.

Incorporation as the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary ("CMRA") enabled these groups to secure contracts with the Canadian Coast Guard and access to training, insurance, and deployment reimbursement. A branch of the CMRA serving the Maritime region incorporated as a registered Canadian charity (Community Benefit/Community Resource) in 1999. The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Maritimes) is sustained by federal government funding. The organization's staff support local marine search and rescue groups, organized by geographic "zones", in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Magdalen Islands. Due to the growth of the organization, a regional office has been established in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The Canadian Coast Guard and their formal auxiliary would be considered the "agent of jurisdiction".

Saint Margaret's Bay Marine Seach and Rescue Society

The Society incorporated as a nonprofit society in 2020 and a registered Canadian charity in 2021 (Community Benefit/Protective Health Care). The organization is based out of a commercial marina in Tantallon and operations are sustained by funding from the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Martimes) supplemented by modest fundraising.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications in fiscal year 2024.

As a registered charity the Saint Margaret's Bay Marine Seach and Rescue Society is eligible to apply for a project-specific grant to the HRM Community Grants Program pending any application for addition to HRM's Registry of Emergency Services Providers. The Community Grants Program application deadline for next fiscal year is March 31, 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not required for this report – the request for consideration related to only one identified group.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS, 2008, c 39:*

Registration as emergency services provider

306 (1) A body corporate may apply to the Municipality for registration as an emergency services provider to provide emergency services other than fire services.

- *Administrative Order 54 Respecting the Procedures for Developing Administrative Orders.*

5. All Administrative Orders, amendments to Administrative Orders, and repeals of Administrative Orders require at least seven (7) days notice to all the Council Members in accordance with subsection 59 (1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

- *Administrative Order 204-018-ADM Respecting Grants to Volunteer Search and Rescue Organizations.*
- *Administrative Order 2023-003-ADM Respecting Registration of Emergency Services Providers.*

ATTACHMENTS

None.