

Memorandum

Office of the City Clerk
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TO: Members of Council
FROM: Dana Earle, Deputy City Clerk
DATE: Monday, July 20, 2020
SUBJECT: **New Business**
Committee of the Whole – July 20, 2020

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

New Business

1. Memorandum from Ms. C. Olsen, Drug Strategy Coordinator, dated July 17, 2020 containing a motion relative to allocation of funds to be received from COVID-19 Community Response Fund
2. Establishment of Committee of the Whole - Closed Session

The following resolution will be presented to Committee of the Whole for consideration:

THAT a Committee of the Whole – Closed Session meeting be scheduled for Monday, July 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in order to receive information relative to a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board; litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board; and advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Krista Power, City Clerk

FROM: Cynthia Olsen, Drug Strategy Coordinator – Corporate Strategic Services

DATE: July 17, 2020

RE: **COVID-19 Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations Through Federation of Canadian Municipalities On Behalf of the Canadian Medical Association Foundation**

The City of Thunder Bay has been selected as one of the recipient communities for the COVID-19 Community Response Fund generously supported by Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF).

The City of Thunder Bay will receive \$44,000 to provide COVID-19 related support to vulnerable populations.

BACKGROUND

On May 29, 2020, administration was contacted from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) indicating that the City of Thunder Bay had been selected as a recipient community for the COVID-19 Community Response Fund generously supported by CMAF, and would receive \$44,000 to provide COVID-19 related support to vulnerable populations.

The Gift is not intended to replace or displace existing sources of funding that may be provided by the provincial/territorial or federal governments. In particular, these funds are intended to complement funding provided through the Reaching Home program as part of the federal government's COVID-19 response plan.

In order to receive these funds, the City of Thunder Bay must provide a brief description of the initiative(s) the funding would go toward.

The following are eligible activities for this funding:

- Health and medical services
- Daytime services and facilities
- Client support services
- Coordination of resources and data collection
- Prevention and shelter diversion

- Housing services
- Capital investments
- Other (if: (i) they contribute directly to the Purpose of the Gift, and (ii) they are approved in advance by the CMAF, or its designate, in writing)

The following are eligible expenses for this funding:

- Personnel
- Supplies and services
- Equipment and technology
- Financing

In follow up to the announcement of the global pandemic on March 11th and the direction of the Federal Medical Officer of Health to “Stay Home”, community non-profit agencies joined forces and pooled existing resources to establish an isolation shelter in April 2020 for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness who may have been exposed to the virus or confirmed to have COVID-19 but may not be acutely ill. This shelter has proven to be essential in providing care for individuals and families affected and keeping the community safe. Protocols, transitional pathways and commitments from multiple sectors have all contributed to the success of this initiative. To date, the Isolation Shelter has served 182 unique individuals providing a total of 1393 bed nights and frequently operated at or near capacity, such that it was necessary to relocate the Isolation Shelter at the end of June 2020.

Isolation Shelter Operations partners recognize the impact of COVID-19 on individuals’ overall health and aim to integrate the fundamentals of harm reduction while caring for persons who consume substances/at risk of withdrawal, and who are ordered to quarantine or self-isolate due to COVID-19 at Thunder Bay District Health Unit designated facilities. Many of the individuals who have required the isolation shelter also require managed alcohol protocols which aim to keep guests at or near baseline alcohol consumption to avoid an early exit or emergency room visits due to alcohol withdrawal or complications. Managed alcohol protocols are a promising option for supporting shelter residents whose pattern of alcohol consumption may place them at increased risk of harm during COVID-19. The provision of managed alcohol (supplies and services) have been provided in-kind from St. Joseph’s Care Group and NorWest Community Health Centres.

Currently Reaching Home funding in Thunder Bay is administered through the Lakehead Social Planning Council and the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre. They have allocated these funds to Shelter House Thunder Bay to support the delivery of Client Support Services for a temporary Overflow Shelter and Client Support Services for a temporary Isolation Shelter.

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board has received provincial funding (Social Services Relief Fund) and have allocated some funds toward the cost of hotel rooms for overflow shelter spaces and isolation shelter spaces, meals, support staff, and the Illness Shelter.

While funding and resources have been allocated by community partners toward the operations of the Isolation Shelter, funds are limited, or are being offered in-kind until a funding source can be identified. With increased surveillance of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations, longer-term operations of the Isolation Shelter is required to ensure that there is continued capacity to meet community needs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and prevent illness and deaths in the homeless population in the City of Thunder Bay.

On July 16, 2020, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit Medical Officer of Health issued instructions under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that will make the use of masks or face coverings mandatory in all enclosed public spaces, effective 12:01am July 24, 2020. Emerging evidence indicates wearing a mask or face covering when in enclosed spaces is an important measure in reducing community transmission of COVID-19. The cost of masks or face coverings may be prohibitive to vulnerable individuals in the community.

Ms. C. Olsen (Drug Strategy Coordinator) has been involved in Vulnerable Populations Planning and in coordinating the Operations Task Force for the Isolation and Illness Shelters since March 2020 and has consulted with these partners and other COVID-19 funders to assist in determining appropriate recommendations to provide to City Council on allocating these funds locally and meeting the requirements of the Gift.

As such the following recommendation is provided for your consideration,

With Respect to the Memorandum from C. Olsen, Drug Strategy Coordinator dated July 17, 2020 relative to the COVID-19 Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations through FCM on behalf of the CMA Foundation, we recommend that \$14,000 of the funds be allocated to NorWest Community Health Centres for supplies to provide managed alcohol support at the Isolation Shelter;

AND THAT \$20,000 of the funds be allocated to The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board to extend the funding for the hotel rooms for the Isolation Shelter;

AND THAT \$10,000 of the funds be allocated toward the purchase of face masks for vulnerable individuals in the City of Thunder Bay;

AND THAT Administration work with partners of the Vulnerable Populations Planning Table to determine appropriate methods for distribution of masks;

AND THAT the Mayor and City Clerk be designated as the signatories for the municipality to receive these funds;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.