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**TO:** Committee of the Whole                      **MEETING:** April 14, 2020  
**FROM:** Shelley Norum  
Wastewater Program Coordinator            **FILE:** 5340-09  
**SUBJECT:** Mutual Aid Agreements during the COVID-19 State of Emergency

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board enter into Mutual Aid Agreements with neighbouring regional districts and member municipalities to enable the continuity of wastewater and drinking water services according to the Provincial Order M084.

### **SUMMARY**

On March 26, 2020, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, enacted Ministerial Order No. M084. Section 7(1) of that Order requires local authorities to “use best efforts to enter into Mutual Aid Agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure that first responder, wastewater and drinking water services are maintained” during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has a pre-existing Automatic Response Agreement and Mutual Aid Agreements to ensure that there is capacity throughout our region to support emergency response services. The RDN intends to seek new Mutual Aid Agreements for wastewater and drinking water services with the bordering regional districts and member municipalities.

### **BACKGROUND**

On March 26, 2020, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, enacted Ministerial Order No. M084. Section 7(1) of that Order requires local authorities to “use best efforts to enter into Mutual Aid Agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure that first responder, wastewater and drinking water services are maintained” during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

The RDN has a pre-existing Automatic Response Agreement and Mutual Aid Agreements in place to ensure that there is capacity throughout our region to support emergency response services. The RDN intends to seek new Mutual Aid Agreements for wastewater and drinking water services with the bordering regional districts and member municipalities:

- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Comox Valley Regional District
- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.
- City of Nanaimo
- District of Lantzville
- City of Parksville
- Town of Qualicum Beach.

The purpose of the Mutual Aid Agreements is to provide a framework by which the signatories may call upon resources of other jurisdictions if their own resources are overwhelmed during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Significant elements of the agreements are:

- Local resources, including contractors, shall be utilized before seeking mutual aid.
- Payment for emergency services under the mutual aid will be on a cost recovery basis and will not include markups for overhead or profit.
- Most specialized equipment will be provided with an operator to ensure adequate familiarity and certification to operate.
- Resources will only be made available if they are not required by their primary jurisdiction.
- Each signatory agrees to indemnify the other for any damage or claims of any nature due to any act done in good faith pursuant to the Mutual Aid Agreement.

A draft Mutual Aid Agreement is currently under review by legal counsel, as well as the regional districts and member municipalities listed above.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board enter into Mutual Aid Agreements with neighbouring regional districts and member municipalities to enable the continuity of wastewater and drinking water services according to the Provincial Order M084.
2. The Board provide alternate direction. The Mutual Aid Agreements are an ordered response to COVID-19 pandemic and the declaration of a state of emergency throughout the whole of the Province of British Columbia.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Costs associated with establishing the agreements are anticipated to require approximately 40 hours of staff time and legal costs on the order of \$2000. It is anticipated that, as a result of the Mutual Aid Agreements, the assisting jurisdiction may bill the requesting jurisdiction for assisted services to cover the cost of assistance during the period of the state of emergency. Therefore, there is no financial implication for the assisting jurisdiction. Costs will be incurred as-needed for the requesting jurisdiction.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The Mutual Aid Agreements are an ordered response to COVID-19 pandemic and the declaration of a state of emergency throughout the whole of the Province of British Columbia. The spirit of the Mutual Aid Agreements also aligns with the Strategic Plan.

People and Partnerships - Seek opportunities to partner with the provincial and federal governments, other government agencies, and community stakeholder groups in order to advance strategic plan goals and objectives.

Social Wellbeing - Make the Region a safe and vibrant place for all, with a focus on children and families in programs and planning.



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April 3, 2020

Reviewed by:

- S. De Pol, Director, Water and Wastewater Services
- R. Alexander, General Manager, Regional and Community Utilities
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer