
TO: Committee of the Whole **MEETING:** April 9, 2019

FROM: Melissa Tomlinson
Special Projects Coordinator,
Emergency Services **FILE:** 7130-03 ESU

SUBJECT: Emergency Services Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Emergency Services Update be received for information.

SUMMARY

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Emergency Program provides emergency management through the British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS) four phase approach to emergency management. Prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery provide the foundation for emergency planning activities.

In 2018, the RDN received grant funding towards three projects. These projects are the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP), Emergency Support Services (ESS) trailer, and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) updates. In addition to the grant funded projects, several projects were outlined on the Emergency Services work plan as a result of the 2016 Gap Analysis.

BACKGROUND

National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) and Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) Project

The project to complete a full Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for the region, including the RDN, City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach will be completed parallel to the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) Flood Risk Assessment Project. Work began on these projects in May 2018, with CCEM Strategies as the successful consultant. This project has engaged over 70 stakeholders from across the region in consultation sessions held in October 2018 and in February 2019. These stakeholder engagement sessions provided valuable information for this project as well as created a networking opportunity for many groups involved in emergency preparedness in our region. A final engagement session is scheduled for June 2019.

This project is on time and is slated for completion in September 2019. The final document will help guide risk-based decision making and will enhance current and future emergency planning documents including the RDN Emergency Plan.

ESS Trailer

The RDN was awarded a \$25,000 grant to purchase and equip an ESS trailer to serve communities of the District. A utility trailer was purchased and converted to an ESS trailer. This included design and construction of a workspace and supply storage, electrical, decals, and ESS supplies. Supplies purchased include tents, tables, pet supplies, comfort items, staff and volunteer materials and a generator. The ESS trailer is fully mobile and can be setup at any location to provide onsite support services. This project was completed in March 2019.

EOC Updates

The RDN was approved in early 2018 for a \$24,000 grant to purchase and install dedicated phone line handsets, a GIS enabled laptop and external storage as well as two satellite phones for the EOC. All these items were purchased in 2018 and came well under budget. A budget amendment was approved in January 2019 to add two radio communications laptops and pelican cases, two LTE tablets as well as a projector and screen. These items are being purchased and this project will be complete in April 2019.

Evacuation Route Planning

In Feb 2019, the RDN received notification that both the RDN and District of Lantzville were successful in their applications for \$25,000 each to complete evacuation route planning in Electoral Area E, Lantzville and Snaw-Naw-As First Nation. An RFP has been issued for work on this project with a closing deadline of April 18, 2019.

Electoral Areas A and C - Emergency Support Services (ESS) Development

Development of an ESS program to serve Electoral Areas A and C has been identified as a priority project for 2019. The RDN held a Community Gathering Event in October 2018 and recruited four interested volunteers. A secondary event is being held in April in conjunction with the Cedar Community Hall. This event will be centered around Emergency Preparedness and ESS recruitment. The first ESS team meeting is scheduled for May to formally register interested volunteers and commence training with a goal to create an ESS volunteer team that can serve our southern communities along with support of the City of Nanaimo ESS team through the Emergency Management Agreement.

Connect Rocket RDN Emergency Notification System

The RDN Emergency Notification System was launched in the spring of 2017 and by the beginning of 2018 approximately 1500 residents had registered to receive notifications. RDN Emergency Notifications are sent through text message and voice calls and were used during the August 2018 Nanaimo lakes wildfire, the October 2018 BC Great Shakeout event as well as during the December 2018 windstorm. Connect Rocket Notifications are also used to inform Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff of activations. As a result of community feedback, the RDN now has a dedicated voice call phone number (778-762-3444) that can be programmed into a user's phone that will identify the RDN as the caller.

The 2018 business plan aimed to increase the RDN Notification System subscriptions by 20% and was advertised through newspaper ads, ad insert in the utilities mail-out, in social media as well as in media releases during emergency events. By the end of 2018, subscription had increased to approximately 7500 residents, which was a 500% increase. So far, in the first quarter of 2019, we have seen almost another 1000 subscriptions. We will continue to use the RDN Emergency Notification System for emergency information and will promote it during community events and in the media where possible.

Emergency Operations Centre Staff Training

Maintaining current training and exercises for staff is essential to being prepared to respond during an emergency or disaster. The RDN coordinates EMBC sponsored training with the Mid Island Emergency Coordinators and Managers (MIECM). This group encompasses approximately thirty (30) local governments, First Nations and emergency management organizations throughout the Vancouver Island region from the Cowichan Valley Regional District to the Regional District of Mount Waddington and from the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District to the qathet Regional District. This coordination ensures that there is a variety of courses offered at different times of the year. In addition to sponsored training, in 2018, the RDN provided an EOC Logistics course, EOC Director course, Policy Group training, and a Learning Lab.

A simulated EOC exercise was held in June 2018, in the RDN Board Chambers, 28 staff attended this two-hour session. In November, a Connect Rocket EOC activation test and EOC set up drill was held in the RDN Board Chambers, 20 staff attended this session.

An EOC Essentials course was held in Lantzville and two EMBC sponsored courses hosted by the RDN are scheduled in the spring of 2019, Information Officer and Planning for Community Disaster Recovery. Two table-top exercises are also planned for 2019, ahead of the Wildfire and Flood seasons.

Community Outreach

In 2018, Emergency Services attended over 20 public engagement sessions providing household and NEPP preparedness information. Events completed or confirmed for 2019 to date include:

| Date | Event | Location |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| January 28, 2019 | Emergency Preparedness Workshops | St. Phillips Church, Lantzville |
| February 19, 2019 | NEPP Presentation | San Pareil, Parksville |
| March 13, 2019 | Emergency Preparedness Workshop | Lighthouse Community Hall |
| April 6, 2019 | Fire Department Open House and Emergency Preparedness | Gabriola Island |
| April 25, 2019 | Emergency Preparedness Information Session | Cedar Community Hall |
| October 5, 2019 | Emergency Preparedness EXPO | Qualicum Beach Civic Centre |

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Emergency Services Update be received for information
2. That alternate direction be provided

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The projects outlined in this update have been accounted for in the 2019 Emergency Services budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Focus On Service And Organizational Excellence - We View Our Emergency Services As Core Elements Of Community Safety



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March 14, 2019

Reviewed by:

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