

DATE OF MEETING February 19, 2020

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SUBJECT FUNDING FOR OVERDOSE EMERGENCY RESPONSE CONFERENCE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain Council approval to dispense the \$200,000 received from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions in 2019 to the British Columbia Patient Safety & Quality Council for the purpose of hosting an Overdose Emergency Response Centre Conference in Nanaimo in 2020.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to dispense \$200,000 received from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to the British Columbia Patient Safety & Quality Council for the purpose of hosting a provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre Conference in Nanaimo in 2020.

BACKGROUND

British Columbia's Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC) operates under the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (the "Ministry") and has a mandate to carry out the government's response to the opioid crisis. Within the OERC, four focus areas have been identified: saving lives, ending stigma, building a network of addiction and mental health services, and addressing the range of social supports that influence health. The Ministry, through the OERC, resources Community Action Teams (CAT) to address the opioid crisis in BC communities. These teams are empowered and funded to provide focused, action-oriented strategies tailored to local community needs. Nanaimo currently has a Community Action Team, and the City of Nanaimo participates in monthly CAT meetings.

In 2019, the City received correspondence from the Ministry indicating that Nanaimo had been selected as the likely location for an upcoming provincial CAT conference. The Ministry requested that the City of Nanaimo hold the funds allocated for that purpose and then disperse those funds to the contractor selected to organize the conference once an organizer and a date for the conference had been identified.

At a Special In-Camera Meeting on 2019-APR-08, Council passed the following motion:

"That Council direct Staff to amend the 2019-2023 Financial Plan to increase the budget for the Community Action Team grant by \$200,000 with funding from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Funds will be dispensed to the contractor chosen by the Province to host an Overdose Emergency Response Centre Conference."

The Province has now confirmed that Nanaimo will be the location for the one-day conference and the British Columbia Patient Safety & Quality Council (BCPSQC) has been identified as the agency that will be organizing the conference. The BCPSQC receives its mandate from the Minister of Health. Given the timeline on organizing the conference for late Spring/Summer 2020, the City has been requested to disperse the funds in full to BCPSQC in early April 2020.

DISCUSSION

The BCPSQC mandate states that the organization “builds a foundation of quality, provides advice and makes recommendations to the Minister of Health on matters related to patient safety and quality of care in all health care sectors. The Council brings health system stakeholders together in partnership to promote and inform provincially coordinated, innovative, and patient- and family-centred approaches to patient safety and quality in British Columbia.”

BCPSQC is currently working to form a planning committee which will drive the content and format for the one-day conference. The intention is bring together three representatives from each of the 35 CATS across BC together to share and learn from their experiences through knowledge-exchange and workshops. Attendees will be a mix of individuals who work with the CATs in BC, including people with lived/living experience with substance use.

Because some of the participants are active drug users, the Medical Health Officer (MHO) has identified there may be a need to set up a one-day temporary Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) at the conference location, which has yet to be identified. (If the conference is held in a downtown location, it is our understanding that the organizers may instead provide transportation for conference participants to the existing OPS rather than opening an additional service.) Should there be a need for an additional OPS for that one day, the BCPSQC has provided the following related information:

- The OPS would be set up under the legislative authority that has been granted to local MHO's by ministerial order and will follow provincial policy and guidelines.
- The OPS would be for conference participants only. It will not be used for public education.
- As part of the creation of the temporary OPS designation, either BCPSQC or Island Health would connect with local RCMP ahead of time.
- Given the attendance expected at the event, this would be a small OPS which will be staffed by knowledgeable and experienced healthcare staff the entire time and provide a safe place for those who need to consume substances under the supervision of a clinician/health care professional.
- The goal is to ensure the safety of all individuals attending the event, and BCPSQC will follow provincial best practice that has been employed at other venues in the past.

As the flow-through agency for the funding, the City does not have any direct responsibility for organizing the conference or overseeing conference activities, but may be asked to participate as part of the host community CAT.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to dispense \$200,000 received from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to the British Columbia Patient Safety & Quality Council for the purpose of hosting a provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre Conference in Nanaimo in 2020.

- The advantages of this option: The proposed conference seeks to enhance the capacity of Nanaimo and other BC communities to address the opioid crisis.
- Financial Implications: There is no impact to the 2019-2023 Financial Plan as this is a flow-through of provincial funding with the City acting as the financial agent.

2. That Council provide alternative direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Provincial Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, through the Overdose Emergency Response Centre, has resourced a Community Action Team in Nanaimo to address the opioid crisis.
- In 2019 the City of Nanaimo received \$200,000 in funds allocated for a conference convening all the CAT teams in British Columbia, with the understanding these funds would be given when needed to a contractor selected by the Ministry.
- The Ministry has identified British Columbia Patient Safety & Quality Council as the organizer of the upcoming one-day conference, which is anticipated to be held in Spring/Summer 2020 in Nanaimo, and has requested the City dispense the funds to the organizer.

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