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| | REPORT No.: 2021-17 |
| MEETING DATE: APRIL 15, 2021 | DATE PREPARED: MARCH 26, 2021 |
| SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND – PHASE 3 UPDATE | |

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with updated information regarding the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 3.

BACKGROUND

At the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided with initial information on the SSRF Phase 3, including the allocation to TBDSSAB and the eligibility of projects and initiatives for these funds (Report No. 2021-11). The Board reviewed and approved the submission on an investment plan to MMAH, outlining the planned areas for expenditure (Resolution No. 21/20A).

The eligible operating expenses under SSRF Phase 3 include but are not limited to:

- Expanding homeless shelter capacity;
- Use of motels or hotels for isolation or to support social distancing;
- Rental assistance such as funding for rent arrears and short-term housing allowances;
- Transportation costs;
- Food security;
- Enhanced cleaning services;
- Non-medical staffing requirements (e.g., enhanced outreach services);
- Personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- Minor retrofits, alterations and repairs under \$50,000 that do not extend the useful life of pre-existing buildings or assets.

Capital projects are not permitted under this funding allocation.

Prior funding provided under SSRF, SSRF Phase 2 and SSRF Holdback have all been allocated, meeting the March 31, 2021 deadline.

COMMENTS

Following the investment plan that was provided to the Board in March, Administration has allocated the SSRF Phase 3 funding to the areas of current and expected need in addressing the impacts of the pandemic on the homeless, precariously housed and those at risk of homelessness. An explanation of some of the priority areas follows.

A key area of support under the Phase 3 funding will again be rent supports, to assist those impacted by the pandemic where rent and utility arrears may result in homelessness. Close to \$300,000 has been provided already under SSRF Phase 1 and 2 to more than 180 families, and with the Phase 3 funding, it is anticipated that an additional 300 households may be supported.

TBDSSAB is again offering support to community groups through the Emergency Pandemic Fund, an application-based initiative that looks to address the needs in all communities through supporting organizations in directly meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Eligible expenses through the Emergency Pandemic Fund include shelter, food, transportation, supports, PPE, cleaning supplies and health and safety costs. This fund had been offered through prior phases of SSRF and was fully utilized.

Continued pressures are expected on the current emergency shelter system, as the pandemic has required operational changes. Reduced capacity to meet public health guidelines, and the need to restrict access under static bed lists have resulted in the need for TBDSSAB to provide funding to overflow emergency shelters - temporary spaces provided to facilitate overnight shelter when access to emergency shelters is limited. Overflow shelters utilize hotel rooms, as well as approved space offered and operated by community support organizations.

TBDSSAB has been a lead partner in the establishing and delivery of an isolation shelter facility to address the vulnerable population and the need to provide safe, supported isolation services. From the initial set-up of an isolation shelter in April 2020, through to the expansion to multiple facilities and over 100 room nights at the peak of the crisis, TBDSSAB has covered the costs of rooms, and at times staffing, security and meals. This support has included isolation space in communities outside Thunder Bay. With new federal funding to now flow directly to health care organizations in Thunder Bay, the need for SSRF funds to support isolation space in the city is reduced. However, it is anticipated that continued support of isolation sheltering needs will continue in other communities throughout the District.

Administration has continued to reach out to community housing providers to determine the need for additional cleaning supplies, PPE and requirements for assistance with measures to implement appropriate social distancing and self-isolation. This includes non-profit housing providers along with community housing units directly owned by TBDSSAB. This support will continue under SSRF Phase 3.

The following chart outlines the anticipated expenditures under SSRF Phase 3:

| SSRF Phase 3 | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Rent Supports | \$ 500,000 |
| Support to Community Groups | 568,670 |
| Overflow Shelter | 295,000 |
| Isolation Shelter | 16,800 |
| Additional Cleaning | 412,480 |
| Testing | 50,000 |
| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | 100,000 |
| Security | 407,332 |
| Administration | 72,500 |
| Total | \$2,422,782 |

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The SSRF Phase 3 is a 100% provincially funded program. TBDSSAB will receive \$2,422,782 upon approval of the SSRF Phase 3 Investment Plan, for use through December 31, 2021.



TBDSSAB is eligible to use up to 3% of the approved funding allocation for administration costs.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with updated information on the SSRF Phase 3 funding, aimed at protecting the health and safety of vulnerable people, to allow the continuation of support for current efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and to address new priority challenges as the province begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

None

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