



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2022-23

MEETING DATE: APRIL 21, 2022

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an update regarding the TBDSSAB's spending under the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).

BACKGROUND

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario announced a new \$200 million SSRF to assist Service Managers address community needs and pressures. At the April 16, 2020 meeting, the Board was presented with information on TBDSSAB's allocation of \$1,168,300 under this fund (Report No.: 2020-19).

At the September 17, 2020 meeting, the Board was presented with information on the SSRF Phase 2 funding, which extended efforts to mitigate the ongoing risk for vulnerable people impacted by COVID and established a new capital funding initiative to encourage long-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19 (Report No.: 2020-35). Following the initial SSRF Phase 2 announcement by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Minister), TBDSSAB was provided \$1,840,459 of which \$1,155,000 was allocated to capital projects by the Board with the remaining \$630,245 allocated to operations expenses and an administration allowance.

At the January 14, 2021 meeting, the Board was presented with a report confirming an additional SSRF Phase 2 funding of \$1,836,300 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) that was made available to support additional capital project investment (Report No.: 2021-02). A total of \$1,781,300 was allocated by the Board to capital projects, with the remaining amount allocated as an administration allowance.

At the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was presented with a report outlining new, one-time mental health and addictions funding from MMAH to be allocated to select Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators under existing program agreements (Report No.: 2021-10). Funding of \$1,040,046 was provided to TBDSSAB to support a range of mental health and addictions-related supports and services. This flexible funding was aimed at addressing the pandemic needs of vulnerable people living with mental health and/or addictions issues and was to be used for eligible operating activities within our service area.

Also at the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided with initial information on the SSRF Phase 3, and at the April 15, 2021 meeting the Board was presented with a report confirming funding from MMAH of \$2,422,782 and the eligibility of projects and initiatives for these funds (Report No. 2021-17). Subsequent updates were provided at each monthly Board meeting, identifying the areas where investment of the SSRF funding was made. As of December 31, 2021, the entire SSRF Phase 3 funding had been allocated.

COMMENTS

At the November 17, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided information on the details of the SSRF Phase 4 funding from MMAH. This information was shared in Closed Session, as the announcement of the SSRF Phase 4 funding was not yet made public. A total of \$2,722,400 was provided to TBDSSAB. SSRF Phase 4 funding was to be fully allocated by March 31, 2022.

Under SSRF Phase 4, TBDSSAB continues to provide 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, community outreach, food, transportation, supports, PPE, cleaning supplies and health and safety costs. From January 1 through March 31, 2022, 5 applications totalling \$103,220 have been approved under SSRF Phase 4.

From the beginning of the pandemic, additional stressors have been placed on the emergency shelter system. 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 emergency shelters utilize approved space offered and operated by community support organizations, as well as motel spaces throughout the District as required. A total of \$45,576 has been expended from SSRF Phase 4 in this area from January 1 through March 31, 2022.

The following chart outlines all the SSRF Phases 1 through 4 and Mental Health and Addictions funding expended by TBDSSAB through March 31, 2022. The SSRF Phase 4 amounts are fully expended or committed as of March 31, 2022.

	Mental Health & Addictions	SSRF Phases 1 & 2 (incl Holdback)	SSRF Phase 3	SSRF Phase 4 (YTD & Committed)	Total
Capital	-	2,939,438	-	2,900,000	5,839,438
Community Support Applications	727,709	275,694	541,848	103,220	1,648,471
Isolation Shelter	15,536	923,823	227,753	-	1,167,112
Overflow Shelter	-	228,000	122,496	45,576	396,072
Supports to Housing Providers	-	26,873	-	-	26,873
Rent and Other Supports	50,419	272,290	1,031,411	-	1,354,120
Communications and Technology	215,364	32,610	10,368	-	258,342
Security	-	287,621	305,907	-	593,528
Additional Cleaning and PPE	-	87,039	110,499	1,204	198,742
Administration	31,018	143,854	72,500	81,672	329,044
Expenditure Subtotal	\$ 1,040,046	\$ 5,217,242	\$ 2,422,782	\$ 3,131,672	\$ 11,811,742
Recoveries					
2021 Program Levy Operating Surplus	-	-	-	(409,272)	(409,272)
Anishnawbe Mushkiki	-	(55,000)	-	-	(55,000)
Reaching Home	-	(24,319)	-	-	(24,319)
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	-	(272,864)	-	-	(272,864)
Total	\$ 1,040,046	\$ 4,865,059	\$ 2,422,782	\$ 2,722,400	\$ 11,050,287

Throughout all phases of the SSRF funding, needs and pressures related to COVID continued to develop and change, and the amounts allocated in each area have been adjusted to meet these changes. The objective was to utilize the available funds in the most impactful manner, within the allowable funding period.

The Minister indicated publicly that another round of SSRF was under consideration. There has been no announcement as of the date of writing this Report. Administration will closely review the 2022 Ontario Budget when it is tabled for any reference to SSRF.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Although the Social Services Relief Fund was not identified in the Strategic Plan, it does meet the strategic directions of Investment, Partnerships and Advocacy. The investments have provided supports and protection to the citizens within the District of Thunder Bay in addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are several long-term impacts realized through the investment in capital projects, resulting in additional transitional housing and emergency shelter spaces.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Social Services Relief Fund is a 100% provincially funded program, although recoveries from other sources were realized during Phase 2 and Phase 4. TBDSSAB has allocated \$409,272 from its 2021 budget surplus to augment investment in SSRF Phase 4 capital projects (Report No.: 2021CS-10; Resolution No. 21/79). The one-time Mental Health and Addictions funding is a 100% provincially funded initiative.



TBDSSAB was eligible to use up to 3% of each approved funding allocation for administrative costs.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with updated information on the SSRF and Mental Health and Addictions expenditures, funded primarily by the province of Ontario. Any information on new SSRF funding announcements will be brought to the Board for review.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

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