

DATE: October 12, 2023**FILE:** 5040-02**TO:** Chair and Directors
Regional District Board**FROM:** James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative Officer**J. Warren****RE: Extreme Weather Response Shelter Request**

Purpose

To provide an update on community planning for an extreme weather shelter for 2023.

Recommendation from the Acting Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT up to \$91,000 be allocated from the 2023 Homelessness and Supports Service (function 451) approved financial plan to support the establishment of an Extreme Weather Response Shelter (November 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024);

AND FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the non-profit organization that is identified by the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness to operate the Extreme Weather Response Shelter that addresses matters such as term, use of funds, and reporting requirements;

AND FINALLY THAT the Board provide a letter to BC Housing, the City of Courtenay and the Province of British Columbia to re-affirm the Board's advocacy efforts to establish a permanent, purpose-built emergency shelter in the Comox Valley.

Executive Summary

- The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (Coalition) has alerted Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) staff to the following risks affecting the community's ability to establish an Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelter for the upcoming inclement weather season:
 - Lack of venue;
 - Insufficient provincial funding to cover full costs of EWR operation by a community non-profit organization.
- An EWR is distinct from both the Comox Valley Emergency Program "warming/cooling centre" and the emergency shelter beds at Connect and Pidcock House insofar as it:
 - Provides time limited (November 1 – March 31), weather responsive, overnight (up to 12 hours) sleeping accommodation in communities where sufficient year-round emergency shelter beds do not exist;
 - Is specifically geared to community members who are unsheltered;
 - Is (partially) funded by BC Housing; and
 - Is not tied to a CVRD service or service agreement.
- The Coalition is actively working to identify a host venue for an EWR Shelter and has requested that the CVRD provide support in the form of "top up" EWR funding.
- CVRD staff recommends allocating up to \$91,000 from the Homelessness and Supports service (function 451) to "top up" funding provided by BC Housing to support

establishment of an EWR (November 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024). These funds have been carried forward since 2022 relating to the Strengthening Communities grant. City of Courtenay staff, as administrators of the grant, have indicated that the carry forward will not be required to cover past expenditures relating to the grant program activities as the activities have been paid for using grant funding.

- Finally, until such time as a new, purpose-built, year-round emergency shelter is developed, the needs of some of the community's most vulnerable members will not be met. Staff recommends re-affirming the Board's position that establishment of a year-round, purpose-built emergency shelter is a critical component of the provincial response to homelessness in the Comox Valley in a letter to BC Housing and the province.

Prepared by:

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Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness	✓
City of Courtenay	✓
Village of Cumberland	✓