



Legislation Text

File #: AR-21-084, **Version:** 1

TAMRMS#: B06

Pandemic Response and Recovery

Presented by: Diane McMordie, Director, Financial Services & Information Technology/CFO

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

WHEREAS Council in 2020 approved expenditures of up to \$2.4 million for costs incurred to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and/or the risks associated with COVID-19 and to comply with related provincial Orders and guidelines;

AND WHEREAS as a result of diligent financial management the City did not require the said funds in 2020;

AND WHEREAS \$2.4 million for COVID-19 related costs remains committed within the Stabilization Reserve;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) that the City maintain a commitment of \$2.4 million for COVID-19 related costs, within the Stabilization Reserve; and
- (b) that the Chief Administrative Officer has authority to utilize the said funds for expenditures the CAO deems appropriate in relation to ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery without further or specific Council approval, including expenditures for organizational, community and business supports as well as any supports that may be required for a vaccination program.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To obtain Council approval for the CAO to access the \$2.4 million presently committed within the Stabilization Reserve for COVID-19 related expenditures, as and when the CAO deems appropriate for that purpose, without further authority or direction from Council.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On March 13, 2020 Council passed the following motions:
(AR-20-091)

1. THAT for so long as spread of the COVID-19 virus continues to be classified by Alberta Health Services as a major public health risk, the CAO be delegated the authority and the responsibility to:
 - a. decide what programs, services, events and operations within the control or oversight of the City should be cancelled, postponed, or modified in any way due to the risk posed by the COVID-19 virus, and
 - b. take such actions as may be required to execute on those decisions.
2. THAT all regular meetings of City Council, meetings of Standing Committees of Council and meetings of any other committee created by Council, be suspended commencing immediately after adjournment of the Regular City Council meeting scheduled for March 16, 2020 until further direction by Council, and that the Public Hearing scheduled to occur at 5:00 p.m. during the March 16 Regular City Council meeting is hereby cancelled and will be rescheduled by Council at a later time;
3. That for so long as spread of the COVID-19 virus continues to be classified by Alberta Health Services as a major public health risk, the CAO be authorized to spend up to \$1,000,000 drawn from the Stabilization Reserve (or from the Risk Management Operating Reserve where the expenditure falls within the criteria for utilizing that reserve) for the purpose of meeting any payment obligations that may arise from measures taken to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19, including without limitation any costs associated with postponement or cancellation of previously scheduled public events, and any costs associated with securing the services of one or more professional medical practitioners to assist the City in determining when it is appropriate for an employee who has taken time off work due to infection or risk of infection to resume their employment duties.

On March 23, 2021 Council passed the following motion:
AR-20-099

That for so long as spread of the COVID-19 virus continues to be classified by Alberta Health Services as a major public health risk, the CAO be authorized to spend up to an additional \$400,000 over and above the \$1 million approved by Council at the March 13, 2013 Special Council Meeting, drawn from the Stabilization Reserve (or from the Risk Management Operating Reserve where the expenditure falls within the criteria for utilizing that reserve) for the purpose of meeting any payment obligations that may arise from measures taken to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19, including without limitation any costs associated with postponement or cancellation of previously scheduled public events, and any costs associated with securing the services of one or more professional medical practitioners to assist the City in determining when it is appropriate for an employee who has taken time off work due to infection or risk of infection to resume their employment duties.

On April 6, 2020 Council passed the following motion:
AR-20-107

That the CAO be authorized to spend up to \$600,000 drawn from the Stabilization Reserve (or from the Risk Management Operating Reserve where the expenditure falls within the criteria for utilizing that reserve) in addition to the \$1.4 million previously approved by Motions on March 13 and March 23, covering the period until the scheduled Council meeting on April 20, 2020, for the purpose of meeting any payment obligations that may arise from the City's actions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 including any measures taken to comply with Orders issued by either or both of the senior levels of government.

On June 15, 2020 Council passed the following motion:
INC-20-039

That Council directs Administration to enter into negotiations with the City of Edmonton to purchase surplus transit barriers for up to \$400,000 from the Stabilization Reserve or Transit RMR Reserve and that Administration report back to Council on installation options.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Council and Administration recognized from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were going to be significant financial implications to the City.

As our 2020 budget was approved in late 2019, we of course could not have anticipated revenue losses (in the millions) in our recreation, culture and transit service offerings and additional costs related to the Emergency Operations Center, cleaning supplies, signage and increased communications needs.

To ensure compliance with the MGA restrictions on spending money not included within an approved budget, Council passed several motions between March 13 and June 15, 2020 to authorize expenditures related to COVID-19 in an aggregate amount of \$2.4 million, from the Stabilization reserve.

Through diligent financial management throughout 2020, the City was able to internally cover these impacts within the existing approved budget and did not need to access any of the \$2.4 million. These dollars continue to be committed within the reserve.

Administration now requests Council approval, through the above-recommended motion, that the parameters surrounding the authorized use of those funds (if required) be specified to include authorization for the CAO to address the ongoing COVID-19 response, recovery activities, and economic supports to businesses and not-for-profits. Some examples of the items that may be included are lease waivers during closures, business recovery grants and supports that may be required to support a vaccination centre.

Supporting this additional flexibility will allow Administration to respond more organically and nimbly to emerging issues in the organization and the community as a result of the pandemic. This funding would be used to assist organizations, community groups and lease holders that have a formalized

established relationship with the City - such as the Chamber of Commerce Farmers' Market or assisting with lease holder rents. Any requests that fall outside the normal day to day Administration operations, relationships and the pandemic would still require Council approval.

Similar to 2020, the funds will only be drawn if these impacts are not able to be supported within the approved 2021 budget.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

None

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

\$2.4 million is already committed within the Stabilization reserve therefore no further financial approvals are required. The motion merely expands the potential use of these funds to support both ongoing response and recovery measures (including a potential future vaccination program).

Legal / Risk:

Program or Service:

Organizational:

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

1. Do not amend the use of funds. This would mean that costs outside of direct COVID-19 response (e.g. recovery supports, vaccination supports) would require specific Council approval
2. Uncommit the \$2.4 million within the stabilization reserve. This would mean that all additional costs including COVID response would require specific Council approval

Report Date: March 15, 2021

Author: Diane McMordie

Department: Financial Services & Information Technology

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble