

# Municipality of Lakeshore - Report to Council

## Legislative & Legal Services

### Fire Services



**To:** Mayor & Members of Council

**From:** Don Williamson, Fire Chief

**Date:** April 30, 2021

**Subject:** 2021 Fire Safety Grant

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### Recommendation

Approve the Treasurer's execution of the 2021 Fire Safety Grant Transfer Payment Agreement for \$13,600 between the Municipality of Lakeshore and the Province of Ontario as described in the report of the Fire Chief at the May 11, 2021 Council meeting; and,

Direct the Clerk to read the execution by-law during the "Consideration of the By-laws".

### Background

In March 2021, the Province of Ontario announced a one-time \$5M grant to assist municipal fire services in addressing the challenges associated with department training and fire inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This announcement included a high level description of related criteria that would be considered for potential approval. The Office of the Fire Marshal would review each municipal application to determine its eligibility.

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Lakeshore received provincial confirmation that our proposed project was approved in principle. Once Administration acknowledged support for allocating the grant funding to the project identified below, steps can continue to secure the funds through the Transfer Payment Agreement process.

### Comments

Administration reviewed the challenges encountered with both fire department training and inspection programs.

Fire Department Training before COVID consisted of all station members training in the same room or off-site together. Since the pandemic, it has transitioned through some

on-line-at home self-study (in-person training was suspended) and now, in-station cohort style learning (only half the station at a time social distanced) to minimize staff interaction.

A common weakness was identified in the training process starting at the development of our on-line training programs through to the in-station training delivery. That weakness was technology. The training laptop in each fire station was 8 or more years old and had become a bottle neck because of their slower processing speeds and having no connectivity capability beyond the individual fire stations.

The Fire Inspection Program is very paper intensive and can require file folders to accompany the inspector along with a camera and other tools to document the inspection. This grant opportunity was a chance to see how technology can assist to streamline that process.

The 2020 budget included support for Lakeshore Fire to connect with a new Fire Department Records Management Software. The City of Windsor hosts that software and was launching it into their own fire service.

Windsor's 2020 rollout was delayed in part by COVID and through some unforeseen software challenges. As a result, Lakeshore's implementation has been delayed until late 2021.

The provincial grant timing works well as it will address both COVID challenges and tie into the new software launch. The Provincial Fire Safety Grant formula determined Lakeshore's allotment to be \$13,600.

The following technology upgrades were submitted for provincial grant approval:

- 5 fire station training tablets
- 2 Assistant Deputy Chief (ADC) tablets for training development
- 2 Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) tablets for fire inspections
- 9 Rugged tablet covers and magnetic keyboards
- 9 – 1 year wireless connectivity cards

The fire station training tablets will have the speed and connectivity to run streamed training programs in station or at off-site locations. This will also connect with the upcoming fire software modernization so on-line emergency response reporting and other fire software modules can be completed back at the station.

Both ADCs develop department training programs with one supervising the FPOs. This provides a tool for training program and video development while providing familiarity with the same tablet used by emergency responders and the FPOs.

As the fire prevention division transitions into the new software, the new tablets will provide them with wireless connectivity to the software with remote access to historical inspection information. This will save transporting paper files and may permit opportunity to transmit inspection documents to the customer before leaving the site.

Each of these devices and their connectivity card closes the communication gap between user and fire administration. The Fire Safety Grant application for Lakeshore Fire was submitted to the province with an estimated value of \$13,455 for the items listed above.

### **Financial Impacts**

The Municipality applied for the Fire Safety Grant pursuant to the authority delegated to the Director of Finance under By-law 93-2019.

The Municipality has been approved for \$13,600 from the Fire Safety Grant program. The grant will be used to offset the cost of the conversion of 5 laptops to tablets that were included in the 2021 lifecycle replacement program, as well as 4 additional tablets that were not previously budgeted. These items will be added to the technology lifecycle program on a go forward basis.

The Fire Department will require an annual operating budget increase of \$1,100 beginning in 2022 to cover the annual cost of the connectivity cards.

**Attachment:** FM Approved – Transfer Payment Agreement - Lakeshore

### **Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	2021 Fire Safety Grant.docx
Attachments:	- FM APPROVED - Transfer Payment Agreement - Lakeshore.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 5, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Kristen Newman

Rosanna Pellerito

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Truper McBride