

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 23, 2025

RE: **Update to the Search and Rescue Service Agreement – 2024**

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Board approve the 2024 Search and Rescue Service Agreement as presented ; and,

THAT the biennial review process outlined in the 2024 agreement be implemented to ensure the agreement remains relevant and effective.

Purpose:

To provide an updated Search and Rescue Service Agreement for approval, replacing the 2006 agreement and reflecting the evolving operational needs and funding requirements of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) Search and Rescue (SAR) service.

Reference:

- Search and Rescue Service Agreement – 2006
- Search and Rescue Service Agreement – 2024

Background:

In 2006, the RDOS entered into a service agreement with four SAR organizations:

1. Keremeos and District Emergency Measures Society
2. Oliver/Osoyoos Search and Rescue Society
3. Princeton Ground Search and Rescue Society
4. Penticton and District Emergency Program Society

The original agreement provided \$55,000 annually to support SAR operations in the service area. Over the years, incremental annual increases raised funding to \$90,000 to address growing operational demands. Since the closure of the Keremeos and District Emergency Measures Society, the South Okanagan Similkameen Search and Rescue Executive Committee (SOSSAR) managed the funding distribution and ensure compliance with contractual obligations among the remaining three SAR teams.

The updated 2024 agreement removes the SOSSAR Executive Committee and replaces it with equal disbursements to each SAR societies determined by the RDOS.

SAR groups play a vital role in supporting RDOS residents and tourists, providing critical response capabilities for emergencies, including support during evacuation alerts and orders issued by the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Analysis:

The 2006 agreement established foundational terms for SAR operations funding but has become outdated. Operational costs, training needs, and equipment requirements have significantly increased since the agreement was first executed. Moreover, SAR organizations now manage more complex and frequent emergency response scenarios, necessitating an updated funding framework and agreement structure.

Key updates in the 2024 agreement include:

- Simplified provisions to reflect the transition from four to three SAR groups.
- Enhanced consultation timelines for annual budget review and funding allocation.
- Formalized provisions for biennial agreement review to adapt to evolving needs.
- Updated clauses outlining financial management and reporting requirements.

The revised agreement ensures continued financial support while promoting accountability and efficiency in SAR operations.

Financial Implications:

The proposed agreement maintains the current funding level of \$90,000, distributed equitably among the three SAR groups. Future funding adjustments will align with RDOS's annual financial planning process.

Alternatives:

The Board can accept the updated 2024 agreement as presented or request further revisions in collaboration with the SAR teams to address additional considerations. Accepting the agreement is recommended by RDOS Staff to reflect current needs and streamline implementation

Communication Strategy:

A communication strategy will include notifying SAR teams, stakeholders, and the public about the updated agreement through direct correspondence, website updates, and social media announcements. Additionally, a press release will highlight the RDOS's commitment to supporting SAR operations and ensuring community safety.

Respectfully submitted:

“Sean Vaisler”

S. Vaisler, Emergency Services Manager

Endorsed by:

“Deborah Jones-Middleton”

Senior Manager of Protective Services