

Request for Decision

CGS International Disaster Response Policy

Presented To: Policy Committee

Presented: Wednesday, Aug 11, 2010

Report Date: Wednesday, Aug 04, 2010

Type: Managers' Reports

Recommendation

THAT Council adopt the City of Greater Sudbury International Disaster Response Policy as recommended in the Report of the Executive Director, Administrative Services dated August 4, 2010.

Executive Summary

In response to the earthquake which devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010, Council requested that a policy be prepared regarding the making of donations in support of international disasters.

The International Red Cross defines a disaster as “*a calamitous event resulting in loss of life, great human suffering and distress and large scale material damage.*”

This report considers roles and responsibilities for international relief and aid, including how other municipalities respond to international disasters, and makes recommendations as to a policy framework for how the City of Greater Sudbury might respond to future international disasters of significant magnitude.

Background

Roles and Responsibilities:

Many municipalities and media outlets have commented on the need to understand and reflect upon whose responsibility it is to respond to international disasters, as part of the process for making decisions regarding disaster relief.

The Federal Government is responsible for foreign affairs and international aid and has an established structure in that regard. According to the Federal Budget 2010, the International Assistance Envelope is budgeted at \$5 billion annually.

The Canadian International Development Agency “*is Canada’s lead agency for development assistance*”

Signed By

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and has specific programs to provide humanitarian response to international crises, including those caused by natural disasters. Many other federal government departments and agencies also respond in times of international crisis. By example, following the earthquake in Haiti, Federal Government Officials and consular staff were joined in Haiti by over 2,000 Canadian Forces personnel and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In addition, the Federal Government matched donations made by individual Canadians, which amount was estimated to be close to \$130 million.

Responses of Other Municipalities to International Disasters:

Municipalities have had varied responses to a number of recent international disasters. In addition to the most recent natural disaster in Haiti, some municipalities have taken actions or made donations towards other calamitous events, including but not limited to the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004, Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005 and earthquakes in China in 2008 and Italy in 2009.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities website includes a page entitled “*Actions Towards Relief Efforts in Haiti*” which outlines the actions taken by thirty-four municipalities and seven organizations representing municipalities following the 2010 Haitian Earthquake. This webpage provides a good, representative summary of how municipalities across Canada have responded to the crisis in Haiti.

Of the thirty-four municipalities listed, sixteen made direct financial donations in varying amounts. Of those donations, only three were in amounts larger than \$10,000 and six were donations of \$1,000 or less. Similar to Greater Sudbury, a few municipalities organized fundraising events for citizens or employees, with Leduc Alberta raising \$15,185 and New Glasgow Nova Scotia raising \$11,000.

Eleven of those municipalities that reported on their activities offered technical or other assistance through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Halton, Montreal and Quebec City deployed either police or emergency personnel to Haiti.

Other initiatives included a payroll deduction program for employee donations and a municipality which waived rental fees in support of a community fundraiser. Some of the municipalities publically encouraged citizens to make personal donations to registered charities.

All of the seven organizations representing municipalities conducted awareness initiatives to promote donations to charitable organizations working on relief and to update their members on reconstruction work. Some also encouraged or managed donations from and on behalf of their members.

Early in 2010, the City of Greater Sudbury participated in a survey of eleven Ontario municipalities with regards to donations to Haiti. Of the municipalities surveyed, two had made donations to Haiti in 2010 and two had made donations to the 2004 Tsunami relief. York noted that the municipal donation made to the Tsunami relief had received significant public backlash and they would not be donating to Haiti. London collected donations from employees and Windsor was looking at fundraising that did not involve tax dollars. The other municipalities surveyed had not made donations to Haiti.

City of Greater Sudbury's Response to Recent International Disasters:

The City of Greater Sudbury has responded to two international disasters in the past year. In the case of the earthquake which shook Aquila, Italy, a book of condolences was prepared for residents to sign and citizens were encouraged to make donations to relief organizations like the Canadian Red Cross. Council matched the funds raised by staff through the dress down days.

In the case of the Haiti earthquake, Council made a public appeal to citizens to donate to registered charities of their choice, and also invited the Canadian Red Cross to set up a donation table at Tom Davies Square. Proceeds of a dress down day held on January 22, 2010 were donated by employees to the Canadian Red Cross in support of earthquake relief. Employees raised \$16,915 for Mission of TEARS through a jug curling fundraising event "Hurry! For Haiti" held in April 2010.

City of Greater Sudbury Related Policy Contexts:

The City of Greater Sudbury's key strategic plans support the development of healthy, sustainable communities in a way that is fiscally responsible.

Specifically, Digging Deeper, Coming of Age in the 21st Century speaks to the cultivation of "*effective partnerships . . . for the transfer of knowledge and skills training*". The Healthy Community Charter focus on civic engagement and social capital "*adds economic, environmental and social value through collective and corporate social responsibility*". The Long Term Financial Plan speaks to ensuring the "*long term-financial sustainability*" of the municipality while meeting "*social equity objectives through specific programs*" and the Official Plan identifies that Greater Sudbury is a "*sustainable community*" recognized as a world leader in environmental protection and "*remediation of environmentally damaged lands*".

Municipal Policies on International Disaster Relief:

Despite extensive research, the only Municipal Policy on International Disaster Relief that was found was the policy approved by the City of Toronto in 2006.

In approaching the development of an International Disaster Relief Policy, Toronto consulted "*GTA municipalities and other big cities in Canada*". Their findings were that:

Most municipalities do not have formal policies and do not support cash donations directly from municipalities to affected areas or regions. Many municipalities emphasized that international disaster relief was not within municipal jurisdiction and they did not have the financial means to provide relief.

Toronto also consulted the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Red Cross as both organizations have "*expertise in providing on the ground assistance*" in disaster response. According to the Toronto report:

Discussions with FCM and the Red Cross confirmed challenges associated with donating equipment, vehicles and supplies directly to affected areas. Both also indicated that while donations of funds is helpful, relief efforts typically fall short in the availability of skilled people to assist with efforts.

The policy which Toronto ultimately developed recognized that although the municipality had no formal responsibility or jurisdiction for disaster relief or assistance, the niche that the municipality could fill in terms of disaster relief, lies in the "*strength of a diverse and highly skilled City workforce that could be of assistance when an international disaster strikes.*"

It is now a matter of policy in Toronto that when an international disaster, as defined by the International Red Cross occurs, there are a number of

Actions the City will not undertake due to the challenges they present in terms of cost, effectiveness and

logistics:

- *The City will not self-deploy staff to the affected region;*
- *The City will not donate funds to an affected area or agency;*
- *The City will not collect funds on behalf of an agency; and*
- *The City will not donate excess vehicles or equipment.*

Rather, the City of Toronto focuses on the lending of expertise. This might be through the deployment of staff at the request of Emergency Measures Ontario or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to assist with immediate first response, such as search and rescue, clean-up and rebuilding. Toronto will also consider deploying staff in support of capacity building projects as co-ordinated by FCM. In addition, Toronto authorized the creation of an international disaster relief fund, capped at no more than \$50,000 and paid for from the sale of surplus fleet and equipment, to “*supplement unforeseen costs associated in our long-term capacity building partnerships*”.

Toronto has participated in a few long-term capacity building partnerships, including a partnership through FCM’s tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. Each of these partnership requests has been considered on a case-by-case basis and reported to Council. For example in 2006, three City of Toronto staff participated in technical exchange missions in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, focused on water drainage and waste collection.

How Municipalities Can Contribute to International Relief and Development:

As noted earlier in this report, many municipalities have responded to international disasters, by expressing their willingness to provide technical assistance in support of either community rebuilding or capacity building in areas affected by natural disasters. Municipal staff often has strong and unique skill sets which can be of considerable value to communities that are rebuilding. These areas can include (but are not limited to) water and wastewater treatment and delivery systems; fire, police and emergency response; solid waste collection and recycling; elections and governance; environmental remediation; housing; and social services.

There are different ways in which municipalities can participate in international relief efforts through this program, including municipal partnerships geared towards building capacity and hosting individuals from developing countries who wish to learn from Canadian municipalities. In addition to helping developing countries or areas hit by a natural disaster to develop technical skills and capacity, these programs provide unique professional development opportunities for Canadian municipal employees and foster both professional and trade links at home and abroad.

Most municipalities, who participate in programs that involve their staff, do so through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). FCM is recognized by the United Nations for its international development work and receives funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for these programs. Specifically, travel, accommodation and meal costs for participants are covered by FCM/CIDA while municipalities contribute staff time to participate in, or host, technical missions.

Summary:

Based on the research and examples of how other municipalities respond to international disaster relief and recognizing that the jurisdiction for such relief lies with the Federal government, a draft “International Disaster Response Policy” has been developed for Council’s consideration.

The draft policy focuses on promoting individual donations from citizens in the community and encouraging donations from employees. The policy also introduces the concept of future participation in capacity building initiatives through FCM, which participation would be presented to Council for decision should such opportunities arise.

The policy specifically states that the City of Greater Sudbury will not directly make donations of money or equipment to relief organizations and others involved in the response to the international disaster.

Draft City of Greater Sudbury International Disaster Response Policy

The City of Greater Sudbury supports a healthy, sustainable and fiscally responsible response to the provision of municipal support to international disasters.

When an international disaster, defined by the International Red Cross as "*a calamitous event resulting in loss of life, great human suffering and distress and large scale material damage*" occurs and is recognized by the Government of Canada and international disaster relief organizations, the of City of Greater Sudbury will:

- Encourage and promote individual citizen donations, to recognized charitable organizations, in support of international disaster relief operations;
- Provide in-kind support to CGS employee fund-raising efforts in support of the international disaster;
- Identify to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) the City of Greater Sudbury's willingness to explore the possibility of providing staff time to participate on technical missions in support of rebuilding capacity in the affected region, subject to Council approval of each such mission.

The City of Greater Sudbury will not make direct donations of money or equipment to relief organizations and others involved in the response to the international disaster.