



**TO:** Council

**FROM:** Trudy Payne, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 25, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Western Counties Regional Library

**ORIGIN:** Council

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

To provide only the mandatory funds to the Western Counties Regional Library and not the discretionary funds of \$4,700 as requested to support employees living wages and benefits.

#### **BACKGROUND**

A letter was received from the Western Counties Regional Library (attached), dated March 31, 2021 requesting an additional \$4,700, beyond the mandatory contribution of \$29,400, to assist with costs to support employees living wages and benefits. Staff had already allowed for these additional funds in the 2021-2022 budget that was approved on March 29, 2021. Council considered this request at their April 12, 2021 Council meeting. It was reported by the CAO that this matter had been recently discussed at a Regional Association of Municipal Administrators meeting and reported that were some municipal units that had made the decision not to provide the additional funds being requested. Council provided direction to staff to reach out the other Municipalities within the western counties to see what other municipalities are planning. Further direction was given to the CAO regarding releasing the funds that are deemed mandatory and to wait until all municipalities have had a chance to discuss the non-mandatory funding, before bringing this item back to Council for further discussion. Since this meeting a discussion was held with the Executive Director of the Western Counties Regional Library in which she conveyed that she had been notified by some municipal units that they would not be providing the additional funds that was requested and due to this fact, the Regional Library Board would be unable to meet its goal this year to increase the wages and benefits of employees to bring them to the same rate provided in other parts of the Province. Based on this, she is recommending the Municipality only contribute the mandatory funding of \$29,400 this fiscal year.

Next fiscal year the \$4,700 requested this year is scheduled to become part of the mandatory funding formula for the Western Counties Regional Library Board. This is when the Board will reassess the wages and benefits of employees.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The alternative is to provide the \$4,700 to the Regional Library Board to be used towards general library services operations as it has been allocated in the budget.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the Board will be unable to achieve the goal of supporting their employees with living wages and benefits, without the full financial support of all the municipal units in the western counties, the Municipality can retain the funds this year with the full knowledge that these funds will become part of the mandatory formula being applied next fiscal on all municipal units.

Attachment: Letter dated March 31, 2021 from the Western Counties Regional Library