



STAFF REPORT  
*Public Hearing 9-5-17*

AGENDA ITEM #: 17-107  
COUNCIL MTG OF: August 15, 2017  
FROM: Dave Caron, Town Administrator  
OFFERED BY: Michael J. Gagnon, EM Director  
PREPARED BY: William Gillis, Deputy EM Director  
SUBJECT: Emergency Management Performance Grant Request

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**PURPOSE:**

Recommendation to apply for and accept, if awarded, a NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management Performance Grant funds for the purpose of updating the Town of Derry AM Advisory Radio System.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

The Bureau of Emergency Management is requesting permission to apply for an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) through the New Hampshire Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The amount of this grant request is approximately \$74,000 with a 50% (\$37,000) cost share. The Town's cost share would be funded through soft in-kind matches from existing funds in the FY 17 and FY 18 Emergency Management budgets. If awarded, this grant funding would support substantial infrastructure upgrades improving system reliability and provide real-time notification to motorists.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2007 - the Derry Bureau of Emergency Management installed and has been operating an AM advisory radio system, Alert AM. This radio station can be found by tuning your AM/FM radio to frequency 1610 AM. The purpose of this system is to notify motorists of important emergency information, street repairs, traffic constraints, and community information. This system is similar to the traffic advisory radio stations you may have seen on the highways. Our system is comprised of three low power transmitters at the following locations: Derry Municipal Center, Hampstead Road Fire Station, and the Island Pond Road Fire Station. Original plans included the installation of flashing alert signs at the Crystal Avenue and Broadway intersection and Ross's Corner. The installation of these signs was to occur during re-design of these intersections. Due to federal highway grant restrictions, these signs were not able to be installed as part of the construction projects. Currently, the Town does not have any flashing alert signs to notify the community to tune in to the radio station. The installation of flashing alert signs at busy intersections in proximity to the transmitter sites would provide real time notification to motorists and enhance community awareness of the system.

The three radio transmitters are connected by copper wire to the audio control station located at the Derry Fire Department Communications Center. The copper wire has demonstrated a lack of resiliency during severe weather including thunder, wind and ice storms. Installation of wireless audio links would provide better audio quality and improve resilience during severe weather.

This grant funding would be used to install three flashing alert signs in the community, install wireless radio transmitter links (remove system from copper wire) and allow broadcast message control over the computer network.

**DISCUSSION:**

Real-time community notification to tune to advisory AM radio station is limited due to the lack of flashing alert signs. During times of severe weather the reliability of the advisory radio system is less than optimal.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The match for this grant will be in-kind through existing funds in the FY 17 and FY 18 Emergency Management budgets. No additional funding requests are anticipated.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION BY COUNCIL:**

The Council is encouraged to approve the August 15, 2017 Consent Agenda, schedule this grant opportunity for a public hearing on September 6 and adopt Resolution #2017-62 upon conclusion of the hearing.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Please see Resolution #2017-062

Attachment: 1) Flashing ALERT Sign example