



# City of Prince Albert

**RPT 2024-286**

**TITLE:** Veterans Graves Maintenance Account

**DATE:** September 11, 2024

**TO:** Executive Committee

**PUBLIC:** X

**INCAMERA:**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Veterans Grave Maintenance Account, remain under the management of the City of Prince Albert and used as intended for the future replacement, repair, care, maintenance, and insurance of Veterans graves that qualify through Veterans Affairs Canada.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Royal Canadian Legion #2 in correspondence with the City April 10, 2024, is requesting for the funds of the Veterans Grave Trust Account be transferred to their general account to be used in support of Legion maintenance, the balance of this account to date is \$94,652.05.

The Department reviewed the agreement and consulted with Veterans Affairs Canada as to roles and responsibilities and through this process concluded the following:

Confirmation with Veterans Affairs Canada identified that only grave sites that fall under their control qualify for 100% funding support. For improvements that do not fall solely under Veterans Affairs Canada, matching funds are required when applying to Veteran's Affairs Canada for funding support. Therefore, the recommendation is for the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account to remain under the control of the City of Prince Albert for future investment at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, St. Mary's Cemetery, and the South Hill Cemetery.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The following resolution was approved at the April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Executive Committee meeting:

*"That CORR 24-19 be received and referred to the Financial Services Department and the Community Services Department for review and report."*

The correspondence referenced in the resolution was submitted by the Royal Canadian Legion #2 dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, with respect to the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account. The correspondence outlines a request by the Royal Canadian Legion #2 for the funds currently within the Account to be transferred to their General Account to be used in support of Legion maintenance.

### **PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:**

The Veterans Grave Maintenance Trust Account was established on May 27, 1993, with the City of Prince Albert. It is important to note that in 1993 the Royal Canadian Legion #2 originally contributed \$1,500 to the Account while The Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary #2 originally contributed \$7,500 for a total of \$9,000.

The Account was setup for a period of ten years with the intention of growing the said funds to a total capital sum of Forty Thousand (\$40,000) Dollars. Should the fund reach Forty Thousand (\$40,000) in a period less than ten years then the money could be used for the purposes set out in the agreement. Within this agreement, it was clearly laid out that even in the event the capital reached the objective Forty Thousand (\$40,000) before the expiry of the ten-year period, none of the funds were to be used until a minimum of five years from the establishment of the fund.

The Account is to be maintained for the purpose of providing an annual payment from the interest earned for the purpose of maintaining graves of the veterans buried in the cemeteries located in the City of Prince Albert, namely, the Roman Catholic Cemetery, St. Mary's Cemetery and South Hill Cemetery. The funds are to be used for the following at these locations:

- maintenance of the grave sites
- headstone bases
- continuous pour concrete runners
- replacement and repair of those runners
- removal and cleaning of all accumulations of moss and scaling
- the repair and refurbishing of carved, impressed or raised lettering.
- cleaning, painting, polishing and other area methods of restoration.

Under the agreement the funds shall also be used for the purpose of providing insurance protection for all liability and/or vandalism to headstones and gravesites. The City of Prince Albert is to manage the fund and only use the interest from the capital for the purpose set out in the agreement.

The Department contacted the Program Advisor for Cemetery Maintenance with Veterans Affairs Canada to determine their funding availability and criteria for funding support. Through this consultation it was confirmed that the Funeral and Burial Program remains in effect. Through this program, Veterans Affairs Canada provides financial assistance for the funeral, burial, cremation, and grave marking of eligible Veterans. The Last Post Fund delivers this program on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada. There are two types of assistance available. Matter of Right which is where the Veteran's death is related to military service, as determined by the medical authority of Veterans Affairs Canada and the financial need as determined by a Means Test through Veterans Affairs Canada.

Grave markers placed though the Funeral and Burial Program are cared for by Veterans Affairs Canada, in perpetuity, through the Grave Marker Maintenance Program. For the grave markers that fall under the responsibility of Veterans Affairs Canada, they are responsible for inspecting them periodically as well as arranging and paying for the required maintenance. Insurance and flags are not items covered by Veterans Affairs Canada's Grave Marker Maintenance Program.

In the unfortunate instance where a Veteran grave marker has been vandalized, Veterans Affairs Canada works with the cemetery owner to address the repairs needed or to replace the marker, if required. Veterans Affairs Canada has confirmed that they do not have a grant program to help cemeteries with maintenance of Veteran grave markers that do not fall under their control. This responsibility is with the Cemetery owner. The Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account should remain in place to assist with this future requirement.

Additionally, Veterans Affairs Canada has a program that provides funding to organizations undertaking remembrance initiatives such as the construction, restoration, or expansion of a community war memorial, as well as community engagement events and activities commemorating Veterans and those who died in service. The City of Prince Albert has previously accessed matching funds through this program to implement improvements to Memorial Square and introduce the new memorials at this location.

With the information collected and provided above it is the recommendation of administration to have the city continue management of the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account and for the funds within to be used for the sole purposes outlined within the Trust Account agreement, established May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

Nicolas Hebert, Program Advisor for Cemetery Maintenance with Veterans Affairs Canada served as the main point of consultation. A review of the available funding sources through Veterans Affairs Canada was beneficial in forming the recommendation to maintain the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account under the City's management and control.

The Department reached out to the Royal Canadian Legion #2 to share the recommendation of the report.

**COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:**

Any future use of the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account will require City Council approval. The recommended projects will be identified through communication with the Royal Canadian Legion #2.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The current balance of the Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account is \$94,652.05. It is important to note that there will be unplanned costs in the future as the Veteran grave sites and headstones age. It would be wise for the city to view the available funding as a measure of responsible planning and governance. The Veteran's Graves Maintenance Account was developed to help offset costs that will arise in the future. The available funding provides crucial resources to help offset future costs not covered by Veterans Affairs Canada or where a matching grant program is identified to make enhancements to one or more of the cemeteries listed in the agreement. The funds would also help aid with a special project highlighted in consultation and partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion #2 where funds would otherwise not be available.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no policy, privacy, legal, safety or environmental implications.

**OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION:**

There are no options to the Recommendation.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This report aligns with the strategic priority of Delivering Professional Governance. Specifically, the Area of Focus related to Organizational Effectiveness where the city will implement long-term budget planning to create predictability in decision-making.

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:**

There are no OCP Strategies or Plans to this report.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

**PRESENTATION:**

Verbal Presentation by Timothy Yeaman, Parks and Open Spaces Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Correspondence dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from the Royal Canadian Legion #2.
2. Agreement dated May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1993, between the Royal Canadian Legion #2, Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary #2 and the City of Prince Albert.
3. Email Correspondence dated June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, between Tim Yeaman, Parks Manager with the City of Prince Albert and Nicolas Hebert, Program Advisor for Cemetery Maintenance with Veteran Affairs Canada.

**Written by:** Timothy Yeaman, Parks and Open Spaces Manager

**Approved by:** Director of Financial Services, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture and City Manager