

The motions **SRD 258/24 and 259/24** document the formal approval of a **\$12,000 grant** for the **Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS)** to support its wildlife rehabilitation and public education programs 48, 259/24. While this represents a moment of successful cross-jurisdictional cooperation between **Director Robyn Mawhinney** and **Director John Rice**, the sources highlight it as a critical investment in a service that provides significant, documented benefits to the entire Strathcona Regional District (SRD).

The 2024 Grant and Financial Impact

The \$12,000 allocation was drawn from the **regional grant-in-aid budget**, which is distinct from the localized Electoral Area D budget.

- **Budgetary Health:** At the time of the request, the total 2024 regional grant-in-aid budget was **\$75,000**.
- **Remaining Funds:** Prior to this approval, \$15,600 had already been allocated to Canada Day celebrations and a Parkinson's disease support group. Following the MARS grant, **\$47,400** remained available for other regional initiatives.
- **Audited Transparency:** The society's financial records were verified through a review engagement by Moeller Matthews Chartered Professional Accountants, which confirmed the society's financial position fairly met Canadian accounting standards, despite standard limitations in verifying fundraising completeness common in non-profits.

Mission and Regional Necessity

The regional district justifies this funding based on the high volume of service provided to SRD residents and wildlife:

- **Regional Catchment:** Although the MARS wildlife hospital and visitor centre are located in Merville, over **one-third of their patients** originate directly from the Strathcona Regional District.
- **Scale of Operation:** In the previous year, the society treated **937 animals** and reached tens of thousands of people through tours, school visits, and digital forums.
- **Urgent Financial Need:** The request was driven by an "alarming trend" where monthly operating expenses consistently exceeded income due to rising costs and a decrease in donor contributions.

Governance Context: A Bridge Between Factions

In the broader context of the **October 17, 2026 local election**, these motions serve as a baseline for what you have termed "functional governance":

- **Team-Oriented Approach:** The motion to approve the funds was moved by **Director Mawhinney** and seconded by **Director Rice**, reflecting the "Leadership and Collaboration" principles of the **Bylaw No. 513 Code of Conduct** 259/24.
- **Consistency of Support:** This 2024 grant follows a **\$5,000 grant** provided to MARS in 2023, showing sustained regional support for the organization.
- **The "Forward" Narrative:** For your **"Building Tomorrow Together"** platform, this record provides evidence that you have actively supported regional environmental assets even when they are championed by directors from the "rural block" 259/24, 53. This stands in contrast to the **"silent opposition"** later seen from rural directors regarding other environmental grants, such as the emergency roof repair for the

Oyster River Salmon Enhancement Society (ORES) 6, 7.

In summary, the approval of the MARS grant illustrates a successful application of **data-backed regional funding**. It ensures that a vital wildlife service used by one-third of SRD patients remains operational while demonstrating the board's ability to prioritize community impact over political friction when following professional staff recommendations.