

Corporate Policy CP-027, titled "**Financial Assistance to Organizations**," was designed to standardize and professionalize the Strathcona Regional District's (SRD) process for awarding **Grants in Aid (GIA)**. Originally drafted in 2021 but left unadopted, the policy aims to replace "legacy" ad-hoc spending procedures with rigorous administrative oversight.

Core Regulatory Provisions

Policy CP-027 introduces several strict requirements intended to ensure **fiscal discipline** and transparency:

- **Mandatory Documentation:** Unlike current guidelines where such disclosures are optional, CP-027 makes it **mandatory** for any organization seeking public funds to provide **financial statements**, a **current year budget**, and a detailed statement of fund usage and community benefit.
- **Centralized Submission:** Applications must be submitted directly to the **SRD Financial Officer**, bypassing the historical practice where requests were sent to individual Electoral Area Directors to review at their sole discretion.
- **Funding Thresholds:** The policy expresses a preference for grant requests that **do not exceed \$5,000**.
- **Explicit Exclusions:** To prevent "service creep," the policy contains **strict bans** on using regional funds for core operations (such as rent or utilities), wages and salaries, debt retirement, scholarships, or multi-year commitments.
- **Structured Review:** It requires specific committee reviews, such as by the Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) or Municipal Services Committee, depending on the location of the benefit.

Governance Context and Conflict

The adoption of this policy has been a primary flashpoint in the struggle over **regional accountability**:

- **Pro-Stability Majority Support:** You (**Director John Rice**) and your municipal colleagues (Directors Sinnott and Colborne) overrode opposition to advance CP-027, arguing that it ensures grants are awarded based on **technical merits** rather than political leverage.
- **Rural Block Opposition:** Directors Gerald Whalley, Robyn Mawhinney, and Mark Vonesch explicitly moved **not to pursue** the formal policy, preferring to maintain "legacy" processes that allow for greater **directorial discretion** and fewer mandatory disclosures.
- **Administrative Impact:** Supporters argue that adopting CP-027 reduces the full Board's liability and the time spent on routine grant processing, allowing leadership to focus on major regional projects like the **\$122 million REC-REATE expansion** 8.

Catalyst for Review

The push for this standardized framework was specifically triggered by funding requests involving the **Cortes Island School and Parent Advisory Council**. These requests raised concerns that regional tax dollars were being used to fund responsibilities that strictly belong to **School District 72**. Adopting Policy CP-027 ensures that every grant is vetted against strict financial standards to protect local property owners from subsidizing senior government mandates.