



**REPORT TO THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017**

SUBJECT **Fire Dispatch Services for Capital Regional District Electoral Areas, Metchosin, Sooke, Highlands and Langford**

ISSUE

The Capital Regional District (CRD) electoral areas and the municipalities of Metchosin, Sooke, Highlands and Langford wish to extend the contract to receive fire dispatch services through the CRD Fire Dispatch Service operating contract with Langford Fire Department for one additional year with a six month notice provision for termination and rolling annual renewals for two additional years.

BACKGROUND

The CRD has contracted the City of Langford (Langford) to provide a fire call relay service to the electoral areas and a number of participating municipalities for more than 20 years. The service is provided from a purpose-built post-disaster building located in Langford Fire Hall #1. Langford has a back-up agreement with BC Emergency Health Services on Leigh Road, Langford, to provide service continuity in the event that the primary fire dispatch centre is compromised.

This service has been successfully provided by Langford under the current contract since January 2013. Quarterly fire dispatch user group meetings provide regular input to the CRD to ensure service expectations are being addressed and the service performance meets or exceeds emergency call processing standards for fire dispatch during the contract tenure. The Fire Chiefs of the participating services have indicated their approval to renew the contract with Langford under the current terms of service with a more flexible term to allow for consideration of regional fire dispatch unification.

The current contract expires at the end of 2017 and as renewal of the contract was contemplated in the 2017 to 2022 Financial Plan process and has been agreed to by the participants, staff intend to proceed with the renewal as delegated, subject to the more flexible terms as agreed to by Langford.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

1. That the update on the status of the Fire Dispatch service contract with the City of Langford be received for information.
2. That staff be directed to facilitate a meeting with Victoria, Saanich, Langford and E-Comm to explore models for the unification of fire dispatch services within the region.

Alternative 2

That the update on the status of the CRD Fire Dispatch service contract with the City of Langford be received for information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The cost for the participants of the Fire Dispatch Service will continue to be budgeted according to the current financial plan, consistent with the terms of the current contract including an allowance for increased labour contract costs. The cost for this service is borne by the participants and is based on a cost recovery approach. The funds are currently requisitioned pursuant to the authority the CRD has to provide enhanced 9-1-1 services, provided that additional services that benefit certain participants are jointly funded by those participants.

Operational Implications

Currently there are three fire dispatch centres within the CRD. A fourth federal fire dispatch exists at the Department of National Defense, but it is outside the CRD's jurisdiction. Recently, Victoria and Saanich have reported that they are entering into a corporation agreement to consolidate their fire dispatch services out of the Saanich fire dispatch facility. Saanich currently has an agreement with E-Comm for computer-aided dispatch for fire services in the region which provides First Right of Refusal to expansion of E-Comm fire dispatch services in the area.

The need to renew the fire dispatch service contract with Langford prior to the end of the year does not provide sufficient time to review alternative fire dispatch service arrangements or potentially advance a unification of fire dispatch services. The fire chiefs of the participating departments have indicated their support for the continuation of the present service. While the District of Saanich has indicated that they would like the opportunity to submit proposals to provide this service, there has been insufficient time since the announcement of the formation of a new Corporation to explore this or other potential options. It is also noted that the construction of the new South Island Communications Centre (SICC) for 9-1-1 police dispatch is under construction and is expected to be complete in January 2019 with ongoing work underway to prepare for E-Comm to assume responsibility for contracted operations at that time.

Intergovernmental Implications

The CRD has responsibility for fire dispatch service in the electoral areas. The fire dispatch contract with Langford operates under the 9-1-1 authority as an enhanced service agreed to by the participants, and it is intended that the dispatchers will continue to operate from the Langford fire hall.

The opportunity to modernize and improve the efficiency of different emergency dispatch services in the region through increased regional cooperation and collaboration was one of the key findings in CRD 9-1-1 and Fire Dispatch Review completed in consultation with all fire departments within the region in 2011. It has been further recommended that the CRD, as the 9-1-1 authority, should take more of a leadership role in facilitating the process to reach agreement on standards, technology, data management and record keeping in order to improve the resilience of the 9-1-1 system, and to improve call management and the availability and transfer of information to dispatch centres.

The recent agreements between the CRD and E-Comm to provide 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) services as well as the agreements between E-Comm and the three police dispatch centres, (Westshore RCMP, Saanich and Victoria) representing the five police services to deliver police dispatch services in the region at the SICC demonstrate positive movement towards a unified regional dispatch service delivery model.

The new renewal terms of the Langford fire dispatch contract would allow staff time to explore opportunities and discuss potential models for a unified regional fire dispatch service with key stakeholders while ensuring effective continuity of fire dispatch services to the participants.

CONCLUSION

The CRD electoral areas and the fire services of Sooke, Metchosin, Highlands and Langford have agreed to continue receiving fire dispatch services from the CRD through contract with Langford. The terms of the contract renewal allows consideration of a regional approach to fire dispatch services within the CRD while providing continuity of fire dispatch service.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the update on the status of the Fire Dispatch service contract with the City of Langford be received for information.
2. That staff be directed to facilitate a meeting with Victoria, Saanich, Langford and E-Comm to explore models for the unification of fire dispatch services within the region.

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