

Appendix C - Comments from Fire Chiefs

From: [Shawn Carby](#)
To: [Teresa Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: Draft Staff Report - Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch
Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2019 3:15:08 PM
Attachments: [SaanichMotionwithNotice.pdf](#)
[CRD Fire Consolidation - E-Comm Initial Discovery - June 20 2019.pdf](#)
[PPS-PS-2019-09 Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch.pdf](#)

Central Saanich

From: Chris Vrabel [<mailto:Chris.Vrabel@csaanich.ca>]
Sent: Sunday, June 30, 2019 11:38 AM
To: Shawn Carby <scarby@crd.bc.ca>
Cc: Patrick Robins <Patrick.Robins@csaanich.ca>
Subject: FW: Draft Staff Report - Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch

Hi Shawn, here is my comment:

1. I highly recommend that the E-Comm discovery, feasibility, and scoping process be supported, and that it happens in an effort to determine the capital and operating costs associated with the required use of the E-Comm CAD, RMS, and Locution for automated alerting for all 26 fire departments in the region.

Thanks,
Chris

COLWOOD FIRE RESCUE
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Victoria, B.C.
V9C 2A4



OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF
Phone: (250) 478-8321
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Website: www.colwood.ca/fire

File: 0220-20-FIRE-21644

July 11, 2019

Planning and Protective Services Committee
c/o Shawn Carby
Senior Manager, Protective Services
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 2S6

Dear Mr. Carby,

This letter is in response to the draft report *"Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the new South Island 911/Police Dispatch Center"* as circulated on June 27th, 2019. Upon reading the draft report there are several items that we would like to bring to your attention:

- The Colwood Fire Department has been and is still supportive of the concept of a regional fire dispatch center. We were optimistic that this would happen in the fall of 2017 when a proposal was brought forward for consideration to the area Fire Chief's and Chief Administrative Officers. Unfortunately, there were concerns regarding costs and the governance model which resulted in several area fire departments proceeding to a Request for Proposal process to verify market costs. This competitive process resulted in five area fire departments moving to the Surrey Fire Dispatch Center as their new dispatch provider in 2018. The Colwood Fire Department is extremely happy with this contract arrangement and will not be changing service providers.
- As part of the Request for Proposal process undertaken in 2017 the five area fire departments evaluated all of the items that you reference in your conclusion; including economies of scale, staffing levels, technology, facilities, administration, costs to tax payers, next generation 911 requirements, governance, service delivery models, and customer support. The recommendation to use \$50,000 to conduct a discovery, feasibility, and scoping study for a regional fire dispatch center is not warranted as the five area fire departments that moved to Surrey Fire Dispatch have just completed this process and evaluation.

- There is a question about the optics, objectivity, and process of the recommendation to award a contract of \$50,000 to perform a discovery, feasibility, and scoping study to the company that would potentially be providing the service. An open Request for Proposal process could potentially provide the same information at no cost.
- Currently there are 17 of the 26 area fire departments that use the CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center managed under contract by the Langford Fire Department. The City of Victoria has recently entered in to an agreement to use this facility for dispatching their department. Five area departments have concluded a Request for Proposal process and moved to Surrey Fire Dispatch. This leaves three fire departments within the region that would potentially benefit from the recommendation if approved. This does not make any sense from a business case or cost perspective as the CRD already operates a regional fire dispatch center. If there is a desire of the CRD to move forward on this issue then it should be supporting and augmenting the service it already provides.

The Colwood Fire Department would have preferred to have had the opportunity to discuss this item at length in person as there are many items and considerations that we have not been able to express in this letter. We do appreciate that you are bound by the wording in the original motion and direction given to staff but please be aware that the Colwood Fire Department is not in support of the recommendation to;

Support the submission of an Initiative Business Case of \$50,000 for the 2020 Legislative and General Services budget to include the time and costs necessary for E-Comm to complete a discovery, feasibility and scoping process for inclusion in the CRD Protective Services 2020 service plan.

Respectfully,



John Cassidy
Fire Chief

Cc Rob Martin, Colwood Mayor
Chris Pease, CAO

From: [Shawn Carby](#)
To: [Teresa Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: E-Comm- East Sooke Fire Department
Date: Thursday, July 11, 2019 8:56:28 AM

From: directorjdf
Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2019 6:03 PM
To: Shawn Carby <scarby@crd.bc.ca>
Cc: Kevin Lorette <klorette@crd.bc.ca>; Robert Lapham <rlapham@crd.bc.ca>
Subject: E-Comm- East Sooke Fire Department

From: East Sooke Fire Deputy Chief <deputy.chief@eastsookefire.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 8, 2019 6:47 PM
To: directorjdf

Subject: Re: E-Comm

East Sooke Fire is happy with the service provided by Langford Dispatch and would not support a change.

Kind regards,

Falk Wagenbach

Deputy Chief

East Sooke Volunteer Fire Department

6071 East Sooke Rd.

East Sooke, B.C. V9Z 0Z8

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July 08, 2019

Shawn Carby,
Senior Manager
Capital Regional District
Planning and Protective Services
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria BC V8W 1R7

Dear Mr. Carby,

I am writing you today in response to your recent request to provide comments for your staff report that will be presented to the Planning and Protective Services Committee on July 17, 2019.

I wish to offer the following comments on the concept of creating a single, Unified Fire Dispatch in the South Island 911 and Police Dispatch Center.

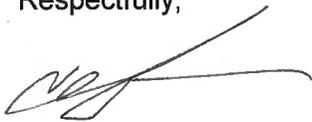
1. I fail to understand the rationale of other officials taking a top down direction (such as within the 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan to unify fire dispatches, or the Saanich Council Motion) without the demonstrated need from fire service leaders.
2. Improving both interoperability and service delivery is a goal of the Esquimalt Fire Department along with many other departments in the region. The staff report alludes to the fact that a common fire dispatch is required. This is incorrect. We can point to many recent examples of how like-minded fire departments and dispatch agencies have collaboratively worked together to improve services while reducing costs.
3. Along with several other fire departments, we recently went to a competitive Request for Proposal process to select a new dispatch provider. Based on those responses we selected a new provider that has improved our service and controlled our costs. As noted in the "E-Comm attachment" to your staff report, assumptions of CREST, CAD and Alerting have been made that will undoubtedly drive costs up for all potential clients, especially in smaller departments who are not required or want additional dispatch or technology features.
4. It appears that the Capital Regional District (CRD) is attempting to create a "new" regional model for the Greater Victoria area when the CRD already maintains a regional dispatch function with the Langford Fire Department. What new cost savings or improvements to the current model will be realized? Competition in the market place already exists and this proposed unification of dispatch will provide a duplication of services and will create a less competitive environment for those potential and willing clients. My question to you is which fire departments are currently unhappy with their

present service provider? And if they are unhappy, why don't they select a proven alternative dispatch rather than this unproven proposal?

5. It appears that the E-Comm proposal is a one size fits all approach. Each regional and municipal department has differing operational needs. Our current dispatch provider provides excellent customer service and flexibility to our operational needs. This attachment clearly indicates that this will not be an option. As you are aware, the departments in the region range from urban to rural and career to volunteer staffing models, all with unique needs. I fail to see the value in a one size fits all approach.
6. I am astonished by the proposal of "Alternative 1" to use \$50,000 of tax payers' money to provide a detailed business case for the discovery, feasibility and scope development for a regional fire dispatch by E-Comm. Engaging a potential proponent to create a model that they may be competing for, or be the recipient of a sole source award, is a direct conflict of interest.
7. National Fire Protection Standards (NFPA 1221) are an important deliverable to the safety of our community in Esquimalt. The E-Comm attachment clearly illustrates that services would target the standard with no certainty or guarantee of deliverables.
8. I understand that by way of Notice of Motion to the Planning and Protective Services Committee, the District of Saanich Councilors on April 17, 2019 has asked for this report and a potential business case for a Unified Fire Dispatch. I am not aware of any limitation that prevents Saanich from conducting a feasibility study for their own costs or to engage E-Comm to provide fire dispatch services. E-Comm provides services for many fire departments across the province and continues to hold an exclusive relationship with the Saanich Fire Department.

In summary, I cannot support the exploration of a Unified Fire Dispatch model as presented in the report especially with the conflict of interest, lack of need from the other chiefs and the proposed cost.

Respectfully,



C.A. (Chris) Jancowski, MA, CFO, MIFireE
Fire Chief,
Esquimalt Fire Department



City of Langford

www.cityoflangford.ca

2019/07/09

Mr. Shawn Carby
Senior Manager Protective Services
625 Fisgard St
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

Dear Shawn,

RE: Report to Planning and Protective Services Committee on Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your report for the July 17, 2019 meeting regarding fire dispatch.

While I recognize that the scope of the motion was narrow and focused on the relevance of only E-Comm being the service provider for a unified fire dispatch and thereby limiting the discussion, the overall intention of the report is to establish a regional fire dispatch center. The CRD has already established a regional fire dispatch center and the CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center has been providing the same service to the region that this report is advocating creating operated by the City of Langford as the service provider. Currently 17 of the 26 area fire departments are utilizing the CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center and recently the City of Victoria has entered into a partnership agreement to co-locate their Fire Dispatch Center into the CRD Regional Center to provide new opportunities to unify our centers.

The motion therefore to spend \$50,000 to have E-Comm complete a discovery, feasibility and scoping process for a unified fire dispatch is not necessary as this service already exists. The model in which the CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center operates under is cost-recovery based on the service levels agreed to in regular meetings by all clients. Costs are shared between clients and it is governed by CRD Bylaw 3854. The discussion in the report therefore should be advocating expanding the current existing regional model rather than exploring options to create a new one.

The CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center has worked hard to provide a service that meets the needs of the individual fire departments, regardless of size or make-up, to ensure that all departments can respond to public safety emergencies. The model allows for feedback to be able to make changes based on the changing nature of the fire service so that we are reactive to what our clients require. Most third party providers have a rigid contract and any changes are at an additional cost thereby providing only a base level of service.

There is also the consideration of all the men and women who currently operate the existing CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center as well as those from the other local centers. The report indicates that E-Comm could operate the unified system, but employees would be under CUPE 873 Collective Bargaining Agreement. If this is true then this would likely cause job loss to the current IAFF employees who have established a

standard that provides for the highest level of excellence for fire dispatching. Any new provider would not have the experience, knowledge, relationships and proficiency in dispatching the local fire departments as the existing staff do. I am proud of my staff and they excel in what they do and what they have achieved in the last 30 years as the areas fire dispatch provider. They all serve this region with professionalism, dedication and integrity and I would not support any change that would move away from using these outstanding people as my dispatch operators.

As demonstrated with the new partnership agreement with the City of Victoria, we as Fire Chiefs are demonstrating a desire to work together, to form new relationships and find opportunities to provide efficiencies and collaborate operationally. This new relationship between Langford Fire Rescue and Victoria Fire Rescue greatly enhances fire dispatch in the regional by consolidating our centers and provides a framework to provide unified fire dispatch services to all in the region who wish to sign on to the existing service. It is expandable, it is cost effective, it is adaptable to the needs of the clients and it is the preferred choice for Langford Fire Rescue for this region.

With most of the fire departments already clients of the CRD Fire Dispatch Center, the disruption of service, new infrastructure required, changes to the service levels as well as possible compensation to Saanich for release of its exclusive right to provide E-Comm fire dispatch services to the CRD would all create significant costs in moving forward. It would be far more cost effective to have the remaining fire departments move to the existing CRD Regional Fire Dispatch Center should they be looking for a new provider which could accommodate the rest of the region's departments.

Therefore Langford Fire Rescue does **NOT** support the staff recommendation *"for submission of an Initiative Business Case of \$50,000 for the 2020 Legislative and General Service's budget to include the time and costs necessary for E-Comm to complete a discovery, feasibility and scoping process for inclusion in the CRD Protective Services 2020 service plan."*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Aubrey", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Aubrey
Fire Chief, Langford Fire Rescue



NORTH SAANICH FIRE RESCUE

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF

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July 8, 2019

Shawn Carby
Senior Manager Protective Services
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, B.C., V8W 2S6

Re: Unified Fire Dispatch

Dear Mr. Carby,

I appreciate the additional time you have provided for us to send our comments on your report. I would suggest the time provided is still not sufficient for us to give your request a fulsome consideration, including a full review with the Greater Victoria Fire Chiefs association, staff and our elected officials.

In the absence of the time needed for a full review described above, I offer the following comments at this time:

- We are always looking for the most cost effective, and high-quality services for the residents of North Saanich. Our Council, like many municipalities in the region, has procurement policies in place that set out the process for determining, and selecting services. As you are aware, the District recently undertook a procurement process for Fire Dispatch services. Although we are always open to exploring options, the District was able to find a quality service provider at a competitive cost through that recent process.
- Attaining a collaborative and cost effective dispatch service for the Capital Region is supported throughout the local fire services. How we get to this goal needs to be thoroughly discussed and a comprehensive needs analysis is needed; the region's municipal fire departments require different levels of service and technology. This of course if it is identified as a required need.

- I would suggest the funds for this proposed exercise be used to hire a professional communications technology consultant to consider the needs of every Department in the region and electoral areas. This would help determine if and how a unified dispatch could be possible, including where it should be located geographically and the financial implications. Given ECOMM would likely be a proponent for a regional dispatch service, I would suggest an independent consultant would be more appropriate and better suited for this task.
- We were informed in November 2017 that ECOMM did not have the necessary space in their South Island Communications Center for a Fire Dispatch operation and that it was to be a police consolidation only. I question how that might have changed.

In closing, North Saanich believes regional collaboration is positive if identified as a need and is able to save money, however we very recently underwent an official procurement process, compliant with Council's policies and that we were able to find a cost effective, quality service solution for the District's fire dispatch services. I would suggest that if there is a strong desire to pursue a regional dispatch, it will need to be done in a more collaborative and transparent way in order to explore the real possibilities of a cost-effective service that could meet the needs of all.

North Saanich does not support the motion of \$50,000 or the recommendations that were made for the reasons outlined above.

Respectfully,



John Trelford
Director of Emergency Services



**OTTER POINT VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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Office Fax: (250) 642-2673
E-mail: jmccrea@otterpointfire.bc.ca

3727 Otter Point Road
Sooke, BC V9Z 0K1

July 9, 2019

Dear Mike Hicks

I understand that the CRD is considering spending \$50,000. to investigate the feasibility of contracting E-Comm to provide Fire Dispatching services to all the Fire Departments in the CRD Region.

Given the many challenges that we are facing with E-Comm having recently taking over 911 dispatching in the CRD Region, I would strongly suggest that this is not a good time to consider a unified Fire Dispatch provided by E-Comm. If CRD has \$50,000. available to spend, then those resources should be spent on repairing the considerable shortcomings of the E-Comm 911 dispatching in our region.

The Otter Point Fire Department is very satisfied with the dispatching service provided to us by Fire Dispatch in Langford. The level of services we receive is excellent. The management and staff of Fire Dispatch in Langford are always available to resolve any issues or concerns that may arise. The local knowledge of local dispatchers is also a tremendous asset.

For these reasons, I strongly suggest that we do not waste time or resources considering moving to a unified Fire Dispatch with E-Comm.

Thank you for considering our opinion.

Regards
John

John McCrea, Fire Chief
Otter Point Fire Department

From: [Shawn Carby](#)
To: [Teresa Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: E-comm - Port Renfrew Fire Department
Date: Thursday, July 11, 2019 8:56:56 AM

From: directorjdf
Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2019 5:58 PM
To: Shawn Carby <scarby@crd.bc.ca>
Cc: Kevin Lorette <klorette@crd.bc.ca>; Robert Lapham <rlapham@crd.bc.ca>
Subject: E-comm - Port Renfrew Fire Department

From: salmondan65@gmail.com <salmondan65@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 2:27 PM
To: directorjdf
Subject: Re: Replies to CRD

Port renfrew fire department is quite happy with Langford dispatch and why spend a pile of money to fix something that is not broken

Thanks Dan kuzman. Fire chief

Sent from my iPad



SAANICH FIRE DEPARTMENT
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THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF SAANICH
Tel: 250-475-5500 | Fax: 250-475-5505

July 10, 2019

Shawn Carby
Senior Manager, Protective Services
Capital Regional District
By Email: scarby@crd.bc.ca

Dear Mr. Carby

RE: Report to Planning and Protective Services Committee – “Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the New South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre”

I am writing in response to your correspondence dated June 27, 2019 requesting comments from area Fire Chiefs on the above subject matter and draft staff report to be considered by the CRD Planning and Protective Services Committee (PPSC) at their meeting of July 17, 2019.

The Saanich Fire Department wholly supports consolidation of fire dispatch services in the Capital Region and moving towards a one facility/service provider model. The economies of scale including but not limited to the financial and operational efficiencies achieved by consolidation of the current fire dispatch services in the region are significant and would result in a much higher level of service collectively for all residents of the Capital Region.

At present, it is my professional opinion that the delivery of fire dispatch services in the Capital Region has become more fractured, and is less efficient more so now than it has ever been. Previous studies commissioned by the CRD and other stakeholder organizations had recommended consolidation options for fire dispatch services in the region moving from three service providers down to two, and potentially to one over the long term with the necessary supports and system redundancies being in place. Contrary to these studies and recommendations, the region has now seen an increase from three fire dispatch providers to four, which has further eroded efficient and effective dispatching and delivery of fire services.

The complexity and challenges resulting from multiple fire dispatch agencies in the Capital Region are considerable and impactful. There are a number of well documented incidents in the region, more so of late, of service delays resulting from misdirected fire emergency call

transfers, unnecessary relaying/bouncing of emergency call information between fire dispatch centers, increased lack of response area familiarity and coordination between dispatch agencies, and deterioration of interoperable radio and telephony communications between fire departments. The end result in many instances has been an unnecessary delay in dispatching and arrival of emergency personnel beyond acceptable service delivery standards at a time when residents need emergency services the most.

The benefits of consolidating existing fire dispatch service providers and having a single regional fire dispatch service are significant including but not limited to;

- Maximize public and fire responder safety by ensuring call processing and dispatching are completed in a single centre and comply with NFPA fire dispatch staffing requirements and call processing times
- Achieve staffing efficiencies by ensuring fire dispatch for the Capital Region can meet peak call volumes for respective fire departments as well as ensure surge capacity for a major emergency or disaster can be managed
- Provide state-of-the-art Computer Aid Dispatch (CAD) and supporting systems technology for all phases of call taking and dispatching and enabling fire departments to share a common operating picture and operating plan for any event in the region
- Maximize responder safety by ensuring an agreed talk group plan to assign responding units Command and Tactical talk groups that are programmed into all radios and that all responding fire departments will interoperate using
- Ensure business continuity and disaster recovery includes complete redundancy in terms of an alternate dispatch location that is regularly tested to ensure full functionality
- Provide appropriate training and oversight of all personnel providing fire dispatch service with documented regular reporting to a User Committee representing both the fire departments receiving the service and the CRD
- Achieve significant economies of scale in the areas of staffing, technology, facilities, supervision and administration resulting in best value for service and tax dollars.

In consideration of a unified fire dispatch it is critical that elected officials and senior regional and municipal staff understand and consider the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system (NG911). The CRTC has mandated that the 911 system transition from voice only capability to be able to communicate with multiple communication technology mediums and devices anywhere, anytime, to deliver emergency services to citizens. The national timeline for NG911 establishes key dates of January 2021 for implementation of text to 911 capability and 2023 for implementation of NG911 data and multimedia services.

The benefits of NG911 to ensuring 911 services are seamless and can be relied upon in any emergency or major disaster anywhere within the province are significant. Similarly, the wave of NG911 financial and technological implications for service provider agencies, including local and regional governments, are imminent and require careful consideration. Consolidation of 911 and dispatching services for Police, Fire, and Ambulance is proven to be more efficient and provides significant financial, operational, and technological economies of scale and is mitigating to the significant NG911 financial impacts looming over service provider agencies and organizations.

With respect to delivery of fire dispatch services in the Capital Region, it is understood that the intent of the CRD staff report is to secure funding to conduct a feasibility study exploring the option of an operating agreement with E-Comm to deliver consolidated fire dispatch services out of the new E-Comm South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre. As a recipient Department of E-Comm technology services, Saanich Fire can speak with confidence to the quality of fire dispatch technology and support services it receives contractually from E-Comm. Saanich Fire has benefited considerably from the E-Comm shared services approach to fully supported and redundant Tier 1 fire dispatch technology and support services and has further become a participant in the E-Comm NG911 telephony system.

The initial assessment document provided to the CRD by E-Comm details numerous caveats and assumptions for a unified fire dispatch. For Saanich Fire, transitioning from receiving fire dispatch and technology support services only from E-Comm to receiving full fire dispatch services raises many questions that require answers. It will be incumbent upon E-Comm to provide a compelling business case that outlines a service delivery model inclusive of detailed operating and capital costs that will provide equal or better fire dispatch services to Saanich residents for the same or less money. More importantly, an E-Comm business case for a unified fire dispatch will only succeed if it can garner the collective support of area fire chiefs and their respective elected officials.

In response to the E-Comm Initial Assessment Memorandum for CRD Consolidated Fire Dispatch and the accompanying CRD staff report to PPSC, I would point out that there are other viable options for consolidated fire dispatch services in the Capital Region that should be explored in detail. As such, consideration of a regional fire dispatch should not just be limited to an E-Comm service being delivered from the new South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre.

There is a strong business case and rationale to consolidate the existing fire dispatch services provided by CRD/Langford, Saanich, and Victoria into one entity delivering regional fire dispatch services from a mutually agreeable location/facility in the Capital Region. A consolidation of this nature could capitalize on the existing E-Comm/Saanich technology and support services agreement while utilizing existing fire dispatch systems and technology infrastructure and experienced staff currently employed with the respective fire dispatch service providers. It is my professional opinion that such a model will prove out to be considerably more cost effective and provide a higher level of service to that of a new unified fire dispatch service delivered by E-Comm out of the new South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft staff report to the PPSC and to provide comments. We are supportive of the recommendation and funding request proposed; however, we would ask that Committee give consideration to expanding the scoping process to consider other business case options, including the consolidation of fire dispatch services currently provided by CRD/Langford, Saanich, and Victoria.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Burgess".

Michael Burgess
Fire Chief

MB/mr

cc: His Worship Mayor Fred Haynes and Council, District of Saanich
Paul Thorkelsson, CAO, District of Saanich

From: [Shawn Carby](#)
To: [Teresa Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: E-comm - Shirley Fire Department
Date: Thursday, July 11, 2019 8:56:39 AM

From: directorjdf
Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2019 6:01 PM
To: Shawn Carby <scarby@crd.bc.ca>
Cc: Kevin Lorette <klorette@crd.bc.ca>; Robert Lapham <rlapham@crd.bc.ca>
Subject: E-comm - Shirley Fire Department

From: Marty Gilbertson <shirleychief@shaw.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 8, 2019 7:51 PM
To: directorjdf

Langford dispatch has served us well over the years,I have always been of the view that if is not broken do not try to fix it.It seems like every time we try to move to some new system for whatever reason it costs us nothing but money and headaches in the long run.Why change what works well for the unknown.



TO: Shawn Carby
FROM: Brett Mikkelsen, Fire Chief
DATE: July 5th, 2019
SUBJECT: July 17th, CRD PPSC Meeting

Mr. Carby,

As requested, comments in response to the draft CRD staff report “*Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the New South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre*” circulated to fire chiefs on June 27th, 2019.

- Direction to draft a report detailing the “Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the New South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre” was issued on April 24th, 2019. The initial provision of only five working days for Fire Chiefs to review and provide feedback seems more a gesture of placation than a genuine effort to consult and collate stakeholder feedback.
- Alternative 1: \$50,000.00 in CRD funds from the 2020 Legislative and General Service’s budget for E-Comm to complete a discovery and scoping process. The proposal is to pay the pre-selected sole source vendor a fee to provide an “accurate” estimate of costs. At the conclusion of a \$50,000.00 tax funded scope of work exercise, how accurate will the estimate be? Will the accuracy be within a 5% range, a 10 % range?
- The listed caveats and assumptions included in the E-Comm memorandum are extensive and will have significant cost implications. Will the CRD staff recommended vendor bid analysis (tax funded) detail these costs in the cost estimate or will these remain at the CRD’s (participating Fire Departments) risk?
- E-Comm memorandum states staffing levels would target the NFPA standard. This is unacceptable, full compliance with NFPA 1221 must be achieved at the outset.
- Staff report states “*The 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan identified the unification of fire dispatch services in the region as a corporate initiative*”. I found this interesting as I could not recollect the Greater Victoria Fire Chiefs (GVFCA) being consulted or solicited for input to this CRD corporate initiative. Were Southern Gulf Islands, Juan de Fuca, or the Salt Spring Fire Chiefs consulted?



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- Pursuance of a cohesive, unified, and cost-effective fire dispatch model is a goal all CRD fire dispatch stakeholders can support. This is achieved based on individual fire departmental requirements and needs, and is understandably what has currently necessitated multiple CRD fire dispatch providers. For example, the dispatch requirements for the City of Victoria Fire Department, including RMS, mapping, CAD, and station alerting differ greatly from the requirements of the Piers Island Fire Department, who responded to a total of 15 calls in 2018.
- Staff report states “*The consolidation of fire dispatch services into a regional service delivery model could potentially decrease response times, improve public safety, and would create a number of economies of scale in the areas of staffing, technology, facilities and administration resulting in best value for tax dollars*”. Sidney recently entered into a dispatch model that has increased public safety by way of full service dispatch, fully supported modern RMS, and seamless dispatch integration with North Saanich Fire on auto aid structure fire responses for approximately 50% of our previous dispatch provider costs.
- Improving interoperability amongst bordering municipalities and fire mutual aid departments is a key deliverable for elected officials and fire service leaders. However, the narrative that this can only be achieved with a geographically local unified fire dispatch center is false. If the real rationale for this initiative is to benefit resident taxpayers and improve public safety I respectfully recommend the \$50,000.00 to fund a sole vendor bid analysis be re-allocated; to fund a communications consultant (selected in cooperation with stakeholder Fire Chiefs) to identify options to improve communications interoperability amongst CRD bordering and mutual aid fire departments.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Mikkelsen".

Brett Mikkelsen, PMP

Fire Chief, Emergency Management Coordinator



July 9, 2019

Planning and Protective Services Committee
c/o Shawn Carby
Senior Manager Protective Services
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard St., Victoria BC
V8W 2S6

Mr. Carby,

Re: Unified Fire Dispatch

At the April 17, 2019 Planning and Protective Services Committee (PPSC) meeting a Notice of Motion was introduced for staff to report on the process and steps to create a unified fire dispatch centre in the new South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre operated by E-Comm.

Included in the motion was the opportunity for area Fire Chiefs to provide comment before the report comes back to the Planning and Protective Services Committee. As such, the Victoria Fire department offers the following in response to the motion, the written submission from E-Comm, and the resultant draft report.

The Victoria Fire Department is in a unique position to offer our perspective as the only Fire Department in the Region operating a dispatch centre exclusive to our own service delivery model and independent from contractual obligation with a third party. Over the span of several decades the Victoria Fire Department has thoroughly investigated multiple options in an effort to identify efficiencies and improvements to the dispatching function of our operations. As a result, the Victoria Fire Department and the Langford Fire Department committed to a collaborative partnership which will co-locate each of their dispatching functions in a single centre. This partnership supports the concept of further integration of Fire Dispatch services in the CRD and the system will "go live" on July 25, 2019.

The following is a summary of observations from the E-Comm written submission and the CRD Draft Report.

- **A suitable Regional Fire Dispatch Centre already exists.**
 - The CRD, under Bylaw 3854, established a service for providing emergency communications dispatch in 2012.
 - The CRD is currently providing that service through contractual agreement with the City of Langford. The Bylaw, and the associated contract, provide an existing framework for a unified Fire Dispatch within the CRD.



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- 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.
- **Union - Labour Relations**
 - A transition to E-Comm would require an application to the Labour Relations Board for sole bargaining unit rights under CUPE, Local 873. The IAFF would have opportunity to make application for successor rights for current IAFF employees who would transition or, potentially, face job loss.
 - CRD Fire Dispatch, Victoria Fire Dispatch, and Saanich Fire Dispatch employees are all presently represented by the IAFF.
 - Langford Fire and Victoria Fire Dispatch have successfully agreed to co-location of services with no resultant job loss, grievances, or other labour relations concerns.
- **Location**
 - The existing CRD Fire Dispatch centre is located in a purpose-built post-disaster building located in Langford Fire Hall #1.
 - The CRD Fire Dispatch centre is able to accommodate mobility challenged persons. The dispatch centre is located on the ground floor of the building and the doorways, washrooms and accommodations are in place to support all employees.
- **Operational Items - Technology**
 - A transition to E-Comm would require installation and implementation of Locution Software fire hall alerting. While effective, this would come at a significant cost to local departments/municipalities.
 - After hours call answering and Emergency Public Works calls are currently provided under the existing dispatch functions. E-Comm would require “separate costing” to perform this service.
- **Transition Timing**
 - The transition of Victoria Fire Dispatch to Langford Fire Hall #1 was conceptualized, planned, and executed in less than 6 months.
 - No renovations are required at the existing CRD dispatch centre.
 - E-Comm would require a nine month renovation process and a minimum of two years to transition the service.
 - Transitional processing was established through agreement with the City of Langford and advisement to the CRD in March of 2019. Should the CRD now be changing direction with regard to support of a regional fire dispatch service, notification should be provided immediately.
- **NFPA 1221**
 - The technology, computer aided dispatch platforms, radio systems, and records management systems currently in use by both CRD Fire Dispatch and E-Comm are NFPA 1221 compliant.
 - Effective July 25, 2019, both E-Comm and the CRD Fire Dispatch centre will meet NFPA 1221 compliance with respect to staffing.

- **Scope of the Motion and Recommendation**
 - The scope of the motion limits service delivery of Fire Dispatch for the region to a single physical location and as such, a single service provider, E-Comm.
 - The recommendation from staff is to allocate \$50,000.00 to provide funding for a single corporation to provide a cost analysis to the CRD for their (E-Comm's) sole benefit.

- **Radio Infrastructure - CREST**
 - E-Comm is the managing authority for radio infrastructure on the Lower Mainland and charges all users of the system an access fee.
 - CREST is the managing authority for radio infrastructure in the CRD which E-Comm and other dispatch agencies have recently joined; economies of scale through reduction of municipal levies have not been realized with the addition of these large user groups.

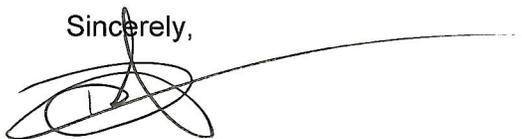
- **Governance and Fees**
 - The cost for participation in the CRD Fire Dispatch Service is based on a "cost recovery" approach and the funds are requisitioned pursuant to the authority the CRD has to provide enhanced 911 services.
 - "Common" or "shared" services under the CRD Bylaw are jointly funded through a clearly defined funding model. Members are not requisitioned for services they do not require or receive.
 - The CRD Regional Fire Dispatch operates under a clearly defined governance structure which is supported by the Victoria Fire Department.
 - Previously investigated E-Comm costing includes a 4% annual increase through 2021 representing a 16.98% increase in indirect costs.

The Victoria Fire Department continues to support the concept of an NFPA compliant unified Fire Dispatch Centre that meets the operational needs of its member departments through clearly defined governance and fiscal responsibility.

The CRD has an existing Regional Fire Dispatch Centre which is capable of supporting all member municipalities in the CRD. With the migration of Victoria Fire Dispatch to Langford, the Victoria Fire Department is committed to continued work within this existing framework to further identify future needs and opportunities for improvement and integration based on a comprehensive review and analysis of costs, effective response, and efficiencies.

Therefore, the Victoria Fire Department does NOT support the staff recommendation "for submission of an Initiative Business Case of \$50,000 for the 2020 Legislative and General Service's budget to include the time and costs necessary for E-Comm to complete a discovery, feasibility and scoping process for inclusion in the CRD Protective Services 2020 service plan"

Sincerely,



Daniel Atkinson
Deputy Fire Chief
Victoria Fire Department



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July 8, 2019

Shawn Carby
Senior Manager Protective Services
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC, V8W 2S6

Re: Unified Fire Dispatch

Dear Mr. Carby,

I read with interest the report from your office and the motion from Saanich to explore the creation of a unified Fire Dispatch, located exclusively at E-COMM Victoria.

As Chair of the Greater Victoria Fire Chiefs Association, I can advise that the Greater Victoria Fire Chiefs have not identified or concluded that an actual problem exists with the current fire dispatch model.

The original motion by Saanich and your subsequent report infer that consolidating the dispatch at E-COMM will benefit the region. Although we are supportive of regional approaches and consolidations of service, as evidenced by several initiatives in which View Royal is involved, we have concluded that any form of consolidation of services must ensure an improvement in service and/or significant cost savings. View Royal Fire does not support the motion, or your recommendations as presented in your report to the PPSC.

Details of the motion, and your recommendation, indicate that the CRD PPSC will be approving a \$50,000 payment to E-COMM to study the feasibility of E-COMM providing the exclusive fire dispatch service to Greater Victoria based out of the E-COMM facility in Saanich. A lucrative arrangement for E-COMM.

Based on your procurement statements, E-COMM will be the sole entity on a contract providing dispatch service. There are several other agencies in the Province that provide Fire Dispatch services to multiple clients and at significant savings to those agencies. As you are aware, Saanich and E-COMM share an exclusive contract for the provision of services related to fire dispatch for the Vancouver Island, a contract that was renewed in



2017. We are satisfied with current dispatch arrangements over either of these providers. When a unified fire dispatch is warranted, a formal competitive procurement process should be used.

The statements and conclusions included in your report and E-COMM's letter are vague at best with respect to E-COMM's ability to provide a compliant service from the center in Victoria. It is my understanding that ECOMM is considerably understaffed with respect to 911 call answer services resulting in a high percentage of calls being answered at their Vancouver center. Further, I understand that ECOMM intends on expanding its 911 call answer capabilities in Victoria which would occupy the space that has been suggested to be used as Fire Dispatch.

The CRD strategic plan speaks to "Increased political impetus to move to a regional fire dispatch model". This described under the Sub Regional Services, Fire Dispatch function. We understand that the current CRD function is limited to the existing profile of dispatch of small communities in unincorporated areas.

It is important to clarify that the CRD already has a regional dispatch service in place which is contracted to the City of Langford. I am confident Langford could accommodate additional fire departments in the region. Approving funds to study the unification of fire dispatch in a sole source contract with E-COMM is not warranted or a responsible use of funds.

Yours truly,



Paul M Hurst M.B.
Fire Chief
Town of View Royal

CC: Greater Victoria Fire Chiefs
Mayor David Screech
Kim Anema, CAO, Town of View Royal