



**REPORT TO PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019**

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**SUBJECT**     **Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the New South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre - Fire Chief Consultation**

**ISSUE**

Following discussion at the July 17, 2019 Planning and Protective Services Committee (PPSC) meeting, staff were directed to consult with area Fire Chiefs on the process and steps to create a unified fire dispatch in the Capital Regional District (CRD) per the following motions:

*6.3 Motion arising, as amended:*

- 1. That staff be directed to bring forward a budget proposal of \$50,000 within the 2020 Legislative and General Service's budget to complete an independent feasibility process to look at a unified fire dispatch model for the region that may include the Saanich facility, the E-Comm facility, the CRD Langford facility and the Surrey dispatch facility; and*
- 2. Ensure the feasibility report includes direct involvement and a complete and comprehensive response from all the region's fire chiefs.*

*Motion to postpone until after a discussion with CRD staff and the regional fire chiefs on the merits of going forward, prior to the provisional budget.*

**DISCUSSION**

Staff presented a report to the July 17 PPSC on the Process and Steps to Create a Unified Fire Dispatch in the New South Island 911/Police Dispatch Centre (Appendix A). The discussion on the topic was postponed to allow staff to consult with the regional fire chiefs.

On September 4, 2019, staff met with area fire chiefs to discuss the potential to move forward with a feasibility study to look at a unified fire dispatch system in the CRD as directed by the PPSC. This meeting was attended by fire representatives of 13 fire services including Victoria, Saanich, Salt Spring Island, Otter Point, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Langford, Metchosin, Colwood, View Royal, Sidney, Sooke, and North Saanich. The members present represented greater than 90% of the CRD population.

The fire representatives were asked if there was support from their areas to move forward with the efforts towards a unified fire dispatch system in the CRD. Of the 13 services present, 11 indicated they do not support moving forward. The reasons given for this include:

- They do not support spending \$50K on a feasibility study;
- Currently happy with the dispatch service they receive;
- Wish to maintain autonomy to look for the right dispatch fit for their service needs and would like to explore collaboration and efficiencies themselves;
- Competitive cost control through access to multiple dispatch options is important to ensure best service for the money;
- Each fire agency has different service needs; and
- The Fire Chiefs would prefer a bottom up approach to the dispatch issue versus top down direction.

During the discussion the fire chiefs highlighted that the CRD continues to offer a fire dispatch service on a cost recovery basis under Bylaw 3854 for which any fire service in the region can petition to join. Municipalities could petition to participate in the CRD Fire Dispatch service through a request from their council and approval of the current participants.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

#### *Alternative 1:*

That the Planning and Protective Services Committee not support the proposed feasibility study and discontinue fire dispatch unification efforts at this time.

#### *Alternative 2:*

That the Planning and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

- a) That staff be directed to bring forward a budget proposal of \$50,000 within the 2020 Legislative and General Service's budget to complete an independent feasibility process to look at a unified fire dispatch model for the region that may include the Saanich facility, the E-Comm facility, the CRD Langford facility and the Surrey dispatch facility; and
- b) Ensure the feasibility report includes direct involvement and a complete and comprehensive response from all the region's fire chiefs.

### **CONCLUSION**

The PPSC directed staff to canvass the regional fire chiefs on the merits of going forward with a feasibility study to look at a unified fire dispatch model for the region. The majority of regional fire chiefs do not support moving forward with this study.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning and Protective Services Committee not support the proposed feasibility study and discontinue fire dispatch unification efforts at this time.

Submitted by:	Shawn Carby, CD, BHSc, MAL, Senior Manager Protective Services
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P.Eng., MBA, General Manager Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

SC:tt

Attachment: Appendix A – July 17, 2019 Staff Report