

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Engineering and Transportation Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Ann-Marie Millson
Manager, Engineering (Transit & Capital Asset Management)

Date: February 2, 2022

Subject: Request to Extend Corporate Grass Cutting Contract for One Year Term

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. An extension to the expired 5-year contract for one additional year for the 2022 grass-cutting season be negotiated.
2. In the event the company currently under contract declines the proposed extension, agreements with registered bidders under the previous contract to take on additional lots for the 2022 grass season be negotiated.
3. Cemetery contractors for quadrant CEM Package 1, Package 2 and Package 4 with documented performance issues be removed from the option to extend in 2022 and a cemetery specific tender for a 1-year contract ending December 2022 be released

Background

In 2017, the Engineering & Transportation division released a corporate 5-year contract for grass cutting on municipal owned or leased property in Chatham-Kent. The contract expired December 31, 2021.

Comments

The corporate grass-cutting contract currently has 721 properties that total approximately 1140.7 acres of property.

The contract that expired in December 2021, was previously released using drawings that were provided from previous contracts and carried forward contract to contract, some of which originated at amalgamation.

To prepare for the release of the 2022 tender document, Engineering GIS staff transferred the 721 drawings to the Chatham-Kent GIS software Esri and have accurately added in property lines, hard surface areas and other areas that do not require cutting to clearly

define the limits under this contract. This labour intensive exercise provides a more accurate calculation for total area measurements for contract costing calculations.

Further advantages to moving to GIS based data, is that maps can now be produced and the new tender can be released using zones similar to the corporate snow removal tender for sidewalks and parking lots. This allows the contractors to see what properties are within a zone and the total acreage.

In reviewing the historical data and the total cost of this contract over the 5-year period, it was noted that through further analysis and closer review of the contract in 2022, cost efficiencies may be determined. Additionally administration is reviewing the requirement of a new By-law prior to releasing a new contract that will assist with cost efficiencies as well.

Administration is recommending inefficiencies be addressed through a business review of current practices with outcomes as follows:

1. Reduce cost of corporate grass cutting contract.
2. Align By-law 99-2021 Grass Cutting – Long Grass and Weeds with changes to our corporate grass cutting level of services and aligning with climate change practices.
3. Review and propose a new By-law with clarity on what each property owner is responsible for in terms of grass maintenance on the municipal right of way.
4. Engage the taxpayers through public engagement sessions on proposed new By-law.
5. Education and correspondence with property owners that could be in violation of the new proposed By-law.

The above actions are required to find efficiencies and savings to base budget costs associated with grass cutting.

Prior to releasing the larger 5-year request for proposal in 2023, administration will be analyzing current practices and address the following:

1. Do we need to cut all municipal owned grass?
2. Should we naturalize some areas?
3. Can we reduce the number of cuts per year on properties?
4. Should contractors be required to only use equipment that is “clean” fuel?
Examples being electrical weed whippers versus fossil fuels, battery powered mowers? This question requires engagement with potential contractors prior to a tender release.

Council’s approval to the extend the current contract for 1 year will allow the above process review to continue and to be completed in 2022 and allow for community engagement to take place.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

- ☐ Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- ☐ A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- ☐ People and Culture:
Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community
- ☒ Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

- ☒ Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- ☒ Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- ☐ Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- ☐ Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Chatham-Kent Legal Services, Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries and Financial Services Departments were consulted in the preparation of this report.

Financial Implications

Grass cutting is a base budget expense that is allocated through several operating departments' budgets. It is anticipated that there will be an increase to grass cutting expenses for 2022 due to higher labour costs, fuel costs and inflation.

Weather is another factor that affects grass cutting each year. If there is more rain, there are more cuts, less rain and a dryer season less cuts per season.

The intent of this report is to inform Council of the need for a service level review that will provide recommendations to reduce the overall corporate budget prior to releasing the next long term contract.

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Attachments: None

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