

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Finance, Budget, Information Technology & Transformation

Information Technology & Transformation

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Sarah VandenBrand, Project Manager
Date: November 14, 2022
Subject: Radio Communications equipment for Next Generation 9-1-1

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

1. The radio communications equipment required for the Next Generation 9-1-1 backup site, be sole sourced to Thames Communications Limited at a cost of \$628,708.
2. The total cost of \$628,708 (including HST) be funded from the NEXTGEN capital budget.
3. Annual maintenance charges of \$15,716 (including HST) be funded from 13903.52171.NG911 existing base budget.
4. The Director of Information Technology & Transformation be authorized to negotiate and execute the final contracts and terms with Thames Communications Limited, subject to the terms and conditions being acceptable to the General Manager, FBITT and Director of Legal Services.

Background

The Procurement By-law #166-2020 was adopted by Council on December 14, 2020. The Procurement Section 125 – Sole Source states the following:

A direct Award of Contract may be used to purchase Deliverables from Municipal funds if there is only one Supplier that provides the product. Sole Source purchases that meet this criteria must have prior approval authorized by:

- a. The Chief Administrative Officer up to \$100,000;
- b. Council above \$100,000.

The [NG9-1-1 Report to Council](#) was approved by Council on October 3, 2022, requesting additional budget to deliver the Next Generation 9-1-1(NG9-1-1) project, and included details pertaining to the requirement and necessity of additional radio communications equipment at the backup site. The need for a backup/secondary location is critical to the resilience of the 9-1-1 service and has previously been agreed by Council.

The back up site cannot function without the radio communications equipment and Emergency Call Operators (ECOs) must have the ability to dispatch and communicate with front line services during an incident. The current technology is dated and will soon be end of life and not supported. Radio communications as a whole service is under review and this purchase will reduce the larger future project.

Council awarded a sole source contract to Thames Communications Limited (Thames) in March 2019 as the longstanding incumbent supplier, and this request is to further extend the contract based on a number of factors. Thames is a locally owned and operated wireless communications company established in 1979 and operates out of the headquarters located at 150 Sass Road in Chatham.

Thames owns and operates the 800 MHz Public Safety Radio System used by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent (MCK) for two-way radio communications to support the day-to-day operations of Police, Fire and Emergency Services (CKFES), and Public Works. The sole source request is based in a number of factors including:

1. Thames is the local authorized Zetron reseller and has secured preferred pricing from Zetron for the Chatham-Kent Police Services (CKPS) project. CKPS is unable to source lower costs for the equipment via any other source.
2. Thames has a sole source agreement with MCK for P25 radio equipment that operates on their network (Thames owns the infrastructure), and includes radios for Police, CKFES and Public Works. The Zetron MAX Dispatch system is radio based and a significant portion of the quote is for P25 radio equipment that will operate on the Thames network. No other supplier can maintain the network and any alterations to the service would require extensive changes to the radio communications platform.
3. Thames supplied and installed the current radio and console equipment at CKPS headquarters and has a twenty-four-hour (24 hour) maintenance contract with CKPS for this equipment. Since this site is remaining in place it would be logical that we would also maintain the console equipment at the secondary site. Without significantly changing the entire platform, no other supplier would be able to respond to, or support emergency services to the same level as Thames, and with the ability to respond quickly to priority support calls. Any delays in service can have an impact on the safety of our front-line responders and the citizens of Chatham-Kent.

4. CKPS does not wish to publish any information about the radio communications platform for fear of compromise or cyber attack.

Comments

A tower may be required to receive the signal, as well as a new radio hardware and a paging system. These costs are not included in this request however the cost for the tower has been included in the revised NG 9-1-1 budget previously approved by Council. The paging system review is in progress, managed by CKFES.

The entire radio communications system used by Chatham-Kent Police, Fire and Public Works is quickly approaching its end of life and has significant vulnerabilities. A full report on the replacement of the communication systems and costing will be brought to Council in mid-2023 ahead of the 2024-2027 multi-year budget process. It is estimated that the costs to replace the entire system will be in the \$10 Million to \$20 Million range of one-time costs and over \$500,000 of increase annual cost plus lifecycle funds, and an estimate of \$15M has been included as a future project in the 2023 Capital Budget delivered to Council in January.

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

CKPS, CKFES and the Public Works department have been engaged in the review of radio communications as a whole. Continuing the relationship with Thames is the only option available at this stage, any changes to the radio platform in general would be a significant project that would require extensive timeframes to deliver. The Chief Financial Officer of MCK, along with the Fire Chief and Director, Public Works are in discussions with the Chief of Police on the future requirements for this service.

Financial Implications

Updated one-time expenses previously approved by Council included the radio communications estimated one-time costs, and lifecycle for the hardware, software and services in included in the operating base budget:

	2022 (approved)	2023 (proposed)	2024 (proposed)	Total (estimate)
One-time expense	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,464,355	\$3,964,355
Operating Base Budget Increase	\$125,000	\$475,000	\$228,017	
Operating Base Budget Cumulative	\$125,000	\$600,000	\$828,017	

Prepared by: Sarah VandenBrand, Project Manager, NG9-1-1, Information Technology & Transformation

Reviewed by: Jason Chickowski, Inspector - Administrative Support Branch, Chatham-Kent Police Services

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Gord Quinton, MBA, CPA, CGA. Chief Financial Officer / Treasurer / General Manager,
Finance, Budget, Information Technology & Transformation

Richard Drouillard, Manager, Security & Risk, ITT.

Attachment(s):

None