

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 2, 2005

VAUGHAN FIRE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

Recommendation

The Fire Chief in consultation with the City Manager, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Capital Reserves and Investments, recommends:

1. That staff undertake to assess the feasibility of various options for the provision of fire communication services;
2. That appropriate external assistance as necessary be retained; not to exceed \$75,000 as provided from the Fire Reserve Fund;
3. That staff proceed with the required notification for an amendment to the 2005 Capital Budget with respect to the \$75,000 cost of retention of consulting services addressing the fire communications service solution;
4. That the Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association be advised of these undertakings and further advised that they will be consulted at the appropriate times and;
5. That the Region of York be advised accordingly.

Economic Impact

The consolidated fire communications project was intended to avoid the future cost increases anticipated in the continued operation of a stand-alone Vaughan Fire Communications Centre. All of the study costs had been absorbed by the Region, with implementation costs proposed to be 'front-ended' by the Region and amortized to the users over future years. Now that consolidation will not be pursued any further at this time, Vaughan will have to front its own costs of determining the best business case and technology solution for Vaughan's fire communication services.

Purpose

The Special Committee of the Whole on April 11, 2005 recommended that staff "...provide a report...respecting the status, options and recommendations, for a City of Vaughan fire dispatch."

Background - Analysis and Options

Council had previously directed staff to investigate the possibility of consolidating fire communication services with several other municipalities in conjunction with the Region of York. During that process it was determined that an amendment to the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA) would be required. Subsequently the Government of Ontario advised that "the government does not view this as a general legislative priority, nor does it view it as appropriate to make a general change to this legislation to accommodate a single situation."

It is understood that staff of the Region of York will be advising Regional Council accordingly and that it is anticipated that the Region of York will not pursue the consolidation of fire communications any further at this time.

The City Manager has been advised by the respective CAOs of Richmond Hill and Markham, that they are open to discussions regarding the provision of fire communication services to any of the seven municipalities previously engaged in the proposed Regional Fire Communications project.

It has been suggested to staff to discuss possibilities with Richmond Hill and Markham fire departments and the Fire Chief thinks there are three options that may be considered:

1. Investigate the feasibility of acquiring complete fire communication services from the Town of Richmond Hill Fire Department;
2. Investigate the feasibility of acquiring complete fire communication services from the Town of Markham Fire Department;
3. Investigate the feasibility of acquiring computer-aided dispatch (CAD) technology services from the Town of Markham Fire Department, while continuing the operation of the Vaughan Fire Communications Centre and employ of our current staff.

To assist in this endeavour, it is also recommended that internal resources be assigned where available and that funding not to exceed \$75,000 for external consulting resources be provided as funded from the Fire Reserve Fund as an amendment to the 2005 Capital Budget, such:

1. That McCauley-Nichols (the consultant engaged by the Region to develop the 7-member business case) be retained by the City of Vaughan to modify the business case to reflect the new options for the City of Vaughan.
2. That a technical consultant be engaged as necessary to assist City of Vaughan Information Technology Management Department staff, as determined by the Chief Information Officer, in the determination of specific hardware/ software/ communication links, etc., to achieve the various options.
3. That internal legal and human resource services and external service, as determined by the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services, be provided to assist with the governance and labour relations aspects of the options.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report recommends a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated.

Conclusion

Given the Government of Ontario will not amend the FPPA and the Region of York therefore will no longer pursue or fund the consolidation of fire communication services for the interested municipalities, the City of Vaughan must now consider its options and refine its own business cases to determine the preferred solution and implementation of fire communication services, including significant technological solutions for the future.

Finance has advised that should Council concur with staff recommendations, then this would be considered as an amendment to the Capital Budget. Pursuant to the Municipal Act Sec 291 (1) before amending a budget, a municipality shall give notice of its intention to amend a budget at a Council meeting. In accordance with By-Law #394-2002, notice of an intention to adopt an amendment at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the Council meeting at which this proposed amendment is to be considered. Therefore, if Council increases the expenditures to the Capital Budget, staff is directed to provide notice of an intention to adopt an amendment to the Capital Budget pursuant to By-Law #394-2002.

Attachments

1. Letter from Michael Fenn, Deputy Minister of Community Safety
2. Letter from C. D. Weldon, CAO, Town of Richmond Hill

Report prepared by:

Glenn Duncan, Deputy Fire Chief, extension 8206
John Sutton, Fire Chief, extension 8205

Respectfully submitted,

John B. Sutton
Fire Chief

Ministry of Community Safety
and Correctional Services

Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire
et des Services correctionnels



Office of the
Deputy Minister
Community Safety

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DM04-00338

Mr. Michael Garrett
Chief Administrative Officer
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Garrett:

Thank you for your letter in which you request a change to the definition of municipality in the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 (FPPA)* to enable York Region to assume responsibility for fire department emergency dispatch services with collective bargaining under the FPPA. I apologize for the lengthy delay in responding.

We have concluded that the only way to effect the proposed change is to amend legislation, for a one-off, municipality-specific request. Given other competing legislative priorities, the government does not view this as a general legislative priority, nor does it view it as appropriate to make a general change to this legislation to accommodate a single situation.

I regret that we cannot be more accommodating with your request at this time. You may wish to further explore options available in the existing legislative environment with your legal counsel.

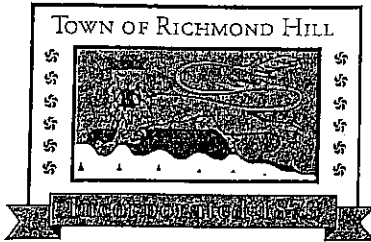
Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Michael Fenn".

W. Michael Fenn
Deputy Minister of Community Safety

c: Neil McKerrell
A/Commissioner of Emergency Management

Mr. Bernard Moyle
Fire Marshal of Ontario



Town of Richmond Hill

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Celebrating 130 Years

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

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March 22, 2005

Michael DeAngelis, City Manager
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, Ontario
L6A 1T1


Dear Mr. DeAngelis:

Re: **Richmond Hill Fire Dispatch**

The Town of Richmond Hill is beginning a review of the dispatch systems that we utilize for our Fire Department. In that regard, we have contacted all of the municipalities for whom we currently provide dispatch services to determine if they are interested in longer term contracts with us as we move forward toward the design and development of a state of the art dispatch system.

Though your Fire Department is currently not dispatched by the Richmond Hill Dispatch Centre, we would be prepared to include you in the discussions that we have initiated with our current clients to see if we can meet your longer term dispatch needs.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know by mid April whether or not you are interested in exploring the possibility of having your fire services dispatched from the Richmond Hill Dispatch Centre.


C. D. Weldon,
Chief Administrative Officer

CDW/sdw

cc John Sutton, Fire Chief, City of Vaughan
John Livey, CAO, Town of Markham

RECEIVED

MAR 24 2005

**VAUGHAN FIRE
& RESCUE SERVICE**



Proud Communities in Bloom Participant