



**REPORT TO THE ELECTORAL AREA SERVICES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2012**

SUBJECT **SELECTION OF FIRE DISPATCH PROVIDER FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT CONTRACT**

ISSUE

The Capital Regional District (CRD) contract for Fire Call Relay expires May 31, 2012, and a selection process for future service provision needs to be determined.

BACKGROUND

The CRD has contracted with Langford Fire Department for over 20 years, to provide fire call relay services to the electoral areas and participating municipalities. This contract has been administered under the CRD 911 Authority Bylaw which allows willing participants to engage in services to the benefit of those participants beyond the core 911 Call Answer function.

The current contract cycle was due to expire in July of 2011. Given that the CRD was engaged in a review of 911 Call Answer and Fire Dispatch, the contract was extended until May 31, 2012 to allow for the participants to use the findings of the report to better understand their future needs from Fire Dispatch. Many participants also wanted to work together to strengthen and clarify future service agreements so all parties would be more involved in the development of requirements, expectations and ongoing assessments of the service.

Near the expiration of the original contract, the City of Langford indicated a strong wish to continue providing service to the participants, and to continue building on the relationship and long-term service model they had developed. Correspondence was also received from the District of Saanich indicating their interest in providing fire dispatch services to the CRD participants, and requesting an opportunity to participate in the selection process.

During the extension to the contract, the CRD brought together the fire departments serviced by Langford to discuss their technical and operational requirements. The initial meeting resulted in a working group being formed. This working group developed a clear set of expectations, which could serve as two potential schedules to a future contract (attached). These documents were circulated in November to all participating fire chiefs for comment, and were then discussed at an open meeting for all participating fire chiefs in February 2012. The attendees of the meeting unanimously supported the documents as accurately reflecting the needs of their departments. The group then discussed future service provision, and as a group, supported moving to a direct CRD service for future fire dispatch, as opposed to contracting with a third party, to allow more stability and better overall control and management.

During the process of developing the terms and expectations, the City of Colwood and the Town of View Royal chose to look independently of the rest of the group, and in doing so, issued a request for proposal (RFP) for Fire Dispatch Services. As a result of that RFP, both have chosen to move their dispatch services to Saanich Fire effective the end of the current contract extension with Langford, May 31, 2012.

Throughout this process, the City of Victoria has indicated they are also reviewing their service model for Fire Dispatch. Meetings between Victoria's Fire Chief and Langford's Fire Chief have taken place. At this time, the City of Victoria has not indicated if they will be making any change, or if so, what that change may result in. Victoria's decision could impact the overall service delivery, as it represents a large portion of the region's fire calls.

With the fire chief's completion of the technical requirements for service, the final process for selection of the service delivery model needs to be determined. As well, all current remaining participating municipalities need to declare future participation as part of this collective, or indicate otherwise, so final budget and operational decisions can be evaluated. Staff has sent a letter to the remaining participating municipalities advising them that the Electoral Area Services Committee will be considering the proposed service model at a special meeting where this report will be discussed.

ALTERNATIVES

That staff be directed to formally request confirmation from all participating municipalities of their intention to remain part of the CRD 911 Call Relay (fire dispatch) service delivery and further that staff:

1. begin the process of establishing a service through the CRD to directly provide fire dispatch service for the participating jurisdictions; or
2. develop a contract for service with the City of Langford to continue providing fire dispatch services to the CRD Fire departments and other participants; or
3. issue a request for proposals to provide fire dispatch to the participants as outlined in the requirements documents developed by the fire chiefs; or
4. issue a request for proposals to provide fire dispatch to only the Electoral Areas as outlined in the requirements documents developed by the fire chiefs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To date, the contracted cost for call relay (fire dispatch) service has funded dispatchers, shared administrative overhead and the continued operation and maintenance of equipment with the primary purpose of providing a handoff between the 911 call answer and fire dispatch. As a 5 year contract, enabled by the consent of the participants under the CRD 911 service, there was no provision to invest in future capital requirements or to charge the participants with a capital levy. There was also reluctance by the contractor, the City of Langford, to invest in capital improvements without an assurance of a long term relationship. However there is now agreement that the service should be converted to a standalone CRD Service to allow for continuity and new investments in equipment. In addition, the service requirements as expressed by the participant's Fire Chiefs have indicated that the service should evolve to now become a full fire dispatch service.

With the decision of the City of Colwood and Town of View Royal to contract to the District of Saanich for fire dispatch services, the cost of the service will now need to be shared by the remaining participants. In order to make the continued relationship viable, the City of Langford has proposed to forgive all overhead (lease, utility) and internal (IT support, finance, human resources and administration) service costs, and only to charge those direct staffing and capital costs required for the service.

A provisional budget is attached to this report, reflecting the increased cost per participant. The actual requisition required will be dependent on the number of participating jurisdictions. If the remaining participants stay within the service, and budget is approved as submitted, the increase to each jurisdiction will be approximately 42-42% over the original proposed 2012 requisition, once it is reapportioned among the jurisdictions.

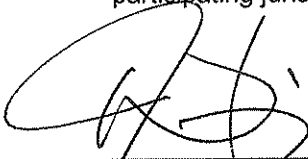
Once the number of participants is confirmed, staff will work to finalize the budget, and resulting requisition impact.

CONCLUSION

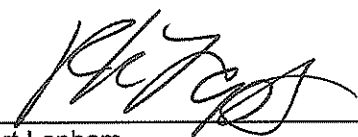
CRD staff has worked with all participating fire departments, through a working group of Fire Chiefs to identify requirements and expectations for service in the future. This work was supported by the CRD Fire Dispatch Review and the recent review of Langford Dispatch by CKM Public Safety. The resulting recommendations of the Fire Chiefs was to provide for a direct CRD service to manage fire dispatch on their behalf, based on the agreed upon service requirement documents.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That staff be directed to formally request confirmation from all participating municipalities of their intention to remain part of the CRD 911 Call Relay (fire dispatch) service delivery and further that staff begin the process of establishing a service through the CRD to directly provide fire dispatch service for the participating jurisdictions.



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Concurrence

Attachments: Working Group Technical Service Requirement Documents

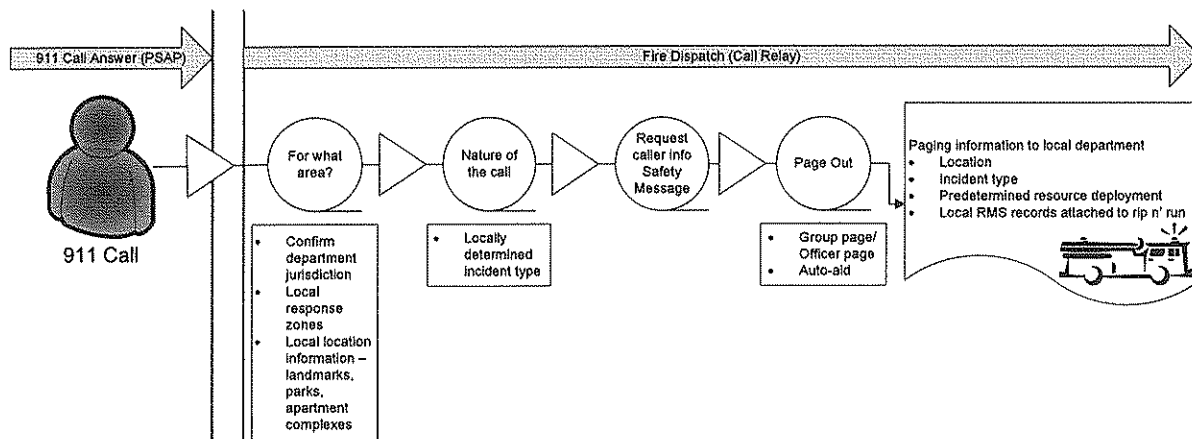
Schedule A

Technical and Service Requirements

The service provider agrees to deliver to each of the dispatch clients the following service components:

1. Call Relay

The process of call relay includes the time from receipt of call from an outside party, being either a 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) or other agency or source up until the time that all relevant information has been transferred to the appropriate responding department through the paging system.



Requirements for Call Relay

Standard expectations for Computer Aided Dispatch Systems (CAD) include access to Address Numbering Identification/Address Location Identification (ANI/ALI), local address information, mapping, time stamping and creation of an incident record. Additional to this, the service provider must be able to provide the following information, with the ability for local departments to define based on local requirements:

- Location information
 - Local landmarks, subdivisions, apartment complexes, trailer parks
 - Local response zones, such as hydrant versus non-hydrant, or local areas assigned to a specific hall
- Incident type
 - Customised to local establishing bylaws and service levels
 - Designated by department from a standard list (fire-structure, fire-grass)
- Specific page out options by department
 - Paging levels (group, officer, platoon)
 - Timely modification to page options (holiday coverage, on call coverage)
 - Assigned resources to incident types for page (Fire-Structure-Engine 11 respond-Tender1 1 respond-Engine12 standby)
 - May include auto-aid calls

- Rip and Runs (information sent to local printers) includes:
 - Incident information: type, location
 - Pre-requested Records Management System (RMS) info (pre-incident plans, location history)
 - Mapping
- Predetermined automatic call out to support agencies
 - Developed by each department based on local needs
 - Includes utility (hydro, gas), other response agencies (police, BC Ambulance Service), public works or others

2. Export of incident records to RMS

If a local department maintains a RMS system compatible with the dispatch CAD, all incident records will be sent to that system at the end of an incident. Any changes to the incident record from the dispatch provider after 24 hours post-incident will be reported to the local department. For departments without a compatible RMS system, incident reports generated by the CAD will be made available upon request.

3. Full Dispatch Support

The inclusion of full dispatch support primarily provides for the dispatcher to remain available to incident command as a resource during the incident.

- During an incident dispatchers will be available to respond to requests from the incident commander for additional assistance or resources.
- For pages where a responder may be working independently (burning complaint, fire investigation) – dispatch will maintain a timer to ensure regular contact and check-ins are made as required by Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) or local safety guidelines.
- All voice transmissions relating to the event, including caller to dispatcher and dispatcher to local department will be logged, time stamped and made available to the local department upon request. Voice logging of operational channels will be dependent on the ability of dispatch to receive the signal from the originating department.

4. Non-Emergency Call Answer

The service provider will provide a 24 hour non-emergency number for local departments to use for after-hours contact by the public to a local duty officer.

5. Local Technology Costs

The service provider acknowledges their requirement to purchase, maintain and replace as necessary any equipment required to provide the service from the dispatch location. Equipment required at the local department to receive the service or information is entirely the responsibility of the local participating fire department. This includes printers, radios, RMS systems, mobile data terminals (MDT) or computers used to receive information from the dispatch provider.

The service provider will provide specifications and equipment recommendations to the local department to ensure compatibility with dispatch for any equipment purchased for the purposes of enhancing the information received by local departments.

Any agreement between a local department and the service provider for the provision of locally deployed equipment falls outside of this agreement and is the responsibilities of those parties to reach an independent agreement.

6. Redundancy

The service provider agrees to provide redundancy to industry standards including:

- Backup power at the dispatch location to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards
- An agreement(s) for backup from a secondary location(s) to handle call overload or an evacuation of the primary location
- Backup for all major equipment or systems including radios, paging, transmission of rip n' runs and other essential services
- Regular testing of all redundancy systems in place
- Reporting on all testing to be available on request by participating departments

7. Standards and Benchmarking

- The service provider will meet the applicable sections of those NFPA standards relating to fire dispatch, including 1061, 1221, and 1561, as required to perform the services agreed to here.
- Any exceptions to these standards will be clearly identified.
- Call answer standards will be measured and reported on according to NFPA 1221.
- Efforts will be made by the service provider to work with other fire dispatch agencies within the region to provide common reporting standards to allow for performance comparison.

8. Service Development

The service provider will commit to the following to ensure ongoing development occurs to the betterment of the service and in the interests of all participating departments:

- Regular communication with other regional response dispatch agencies including fire, police and ambulance, as well as associated agencies including Joint Rescue Communications Centre (JRCC) and the Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) within Emergency Management BC (EMBC) to ensure coordination of incident information and dispatch protocols.
- Participation in national or provincial organizations such as National Emergency Number Association (NENA), Association of Public Safety Communications Organization (APCO) or 911 Association of BC to ensure the provider is aware of emerging changes in dispatch and 911.
- Maintenance of a formal training program for all staff involved in dispatch to ensure competencies are measured and maintained to standards.
- Process for the sharing of information on changing technology or issues affecting dispatch out to all local departments.

Schedule B

Oversight, Review and Financial Reporting

The service provider agrees to the following protocols for ongoing oversight, review and financial reporting by the participants of this contract:

Oversight

- Monthly and annual reports showing overall dispatch performance versus agreed upon standards and benchmarks will be provided electronically to all local departments.
- Annual reports showing dispatch performance for individual local department versus agreed upon standards and benchmarks will be provided electronically to each department.
- Calls falling outside the standards and benchmarks will have an associated file showing internal review and recommendations from that call, and this information will be provided to the affected department in a timely manner.
- Local departments will have the ability to request a review of a call by the dispatch service provider.
- The service provider's Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and Dispatch Training programs will be made available to all local departments to provide a full understanding of the provider's operations and performance management.

Review

- Quarterly, the service provider will host a meeting of a predetermined working group to review call records and performance, and to discuss any recommendations made to determine if changes to the operations should be considered.
- Annually, the service provider will host a meeting of all local departments to review the past year's performance and changes being considered for the coming year.
- This annual meeting will include discussion on recommended changes to technology, SOGs or dispatcher training programs that will improve performance against agreed upon standards and benchmarks.

Financial Reporting

- Annually, the service provider will deliver a five year operational and capital plan, providing an understanding to local departments of any planned investment in technology upgrades, and the sustainability of the service to maintain acceptable service levels.
- Major capital or equipment inventories will be maintained showing date of purchase, and planned date of replacement to ensure long term financial planning is in place to support required upgrades or replacements.