



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

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2024 BUDGET REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Directors, Committee of the Whole

FROM: Melanie Perrin, Manager of Public Safety Operations

DATE: November 9, 2023

SUBJECT: 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service – 2503

SUMMARY: Purpose: Consider and Approve Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

File No.: BUD 1.0

Attachments:

1. 2024 Proposed Budget
2. 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. THAT the report be received.
2. THAT the 2024 budget for 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service be approved.
3. THAT the 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan for 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service be approved.

| ENTITLEMENT | HOW VOTE COUNTED |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| All 1 Director/1 vote | Majority |
| All Weighted | Majority |
| All Weighted | Majority |

SERVICE DESCRIPTION:

The 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service provides for emergency 9-1-1 call taking services, transfer of emergency calls to the appropriate downstream agency, and coordinated fire dispatch and communications services for 100 fire/rescue agencies. The 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service budget supports the administration and operation of the primary 9-1-1 call answer function and the centralized fire/rescue dispatch communication system.

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service was established in 1990 to provide three functions:

- Primary Public Safety Answering Point 9-1-1 Call-Answer service which allows for individuals to reach emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) by dialing 9-1-1
- Secondary Public Safety Answering Service Point for Fire Dispatch call-answer services (FOCC fire dispatch) which receives fire/rescue emergency calls, dispatches fire/rescue services and supports the responding fire/rescue agency during incident response
- Radio Communication for all fire departments within the RDIFFG region which includes radio system supply and maintenance, communication tower network maintenance and operation and maintenance of support systems

The service is a region wide service with all member municipalities and electoral areas participating. Service delivery to other local governments is a fee-for-service arrangement based on term service contracts.

Contracts with the Cariboo (CRD), Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) and Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) Regional Districts include FOCC fire dispatch and EComm 9-1-1 call-answer services. The contract with the Central Kootenay Regional District (RDCK) is exclusive to FOCC fire dispatch services only.

The 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service further supports the development and operation of two centralized fire dispatch facilities located within the City of Prince George. It supports a reciprocal agreement for the provision of fire dispatch back-up service with North Island 9-1-1 Corporation.

In 2023, Public Safety Administration's focus was on:

- continued implementation of the Public Safety Operations Quality Assurance Program;
- providing expertise to radio contractors working on the field radio systems in partner regional districts;
- providing expertise to Prince George Fire Rescue and RDFFG volunteer fire services on radio specifications, requirements, and programming;
- ensuring the continued operation of the fire/rescue agencies' field radio system and the dispatch radio console at the FOCC;
- completion of a new communications site to improve radio communications in Salmon Valley;
- continued investigation into the replacement of the Buckhorn and Ness Lake communications towers
- negotiation of a one-year extension to the E-Comm contract for call answer services;
- negotiation of new five-year contracts with RDBN, CRD, RDKS, and RDCK for 9-11 call answer and fire dispatch services;
- continuing work on the feasibility study for call-answer services;
- computer aided dispatch and records management system maintenance and design planning for new systems infrastructure; and
- continued work and support of the two new and independently redundant fire dispatch sites that are Next Generation 9-1-1 ready.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

- ☐ Climate Action ☐ Economic Health ☐ Indigenous Relations ☒ Strong Communities
- ☐ None – Statutory or Routine Business

SERVICE DETAILS:

Participants: All Municipalities and Electoral Areas

Requisition Limit: None

Debt Balance: MFA Issue No. 157 for \$2,882,559

Final Payment: April 2042

SERVICE WORKPLAN:

- Enhance investment in staff training and technical skills development opportunities, and implement strategies for succession planning.
- Continued implementation of the quality assurance/quality improvement and capacity monitoring program to support public safety operations.
- Continue to encourage use of the records management system by providing on-site training for fire/rescue personnel.
- Complete enhancements of information technology systems to meet Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission mandated Next Generation 9-1-1 implementation requirements and prepare for transition to NG 9-1-1.
- Complete large tower inspections and maintenance of the radio communications system and sites.
- Enhance radio communications coverage and security/safety of infrastructure sites, specifically for 2024; a new Buckhorn communications tower and a new Ness Lake Communications tower.
- Complete commissioning of the alternate Public Safety Operations Site, to provide enhanced system resiliency.

- Life-cycle replacement of aging and technically unsupported dispatch equipment and systems.
- Replacement of the current Computer Aided Dispatch system, which is reaching end of life.
- Investigate replacement of the Records Management System, which is reaching end of life.
- Complete feasibility study for call-answer services.

2024 CAPITAL PROJECTS OF NOTE:

| Project | Cost Estimate | Notes |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Computer Aided Dispatch Replacement | \$ 1,200,000 | Funded by short-term borrowing, reserves, and operating budget. |
| Buckhorn Communications Site (Total project value - \$390,000) | \$ 390,000 | Funded by grant funding. |
| Ness Lake Communications Site (Total project value - \$200,000) | \$ 200,000 | Funded by grant funding. |
| Next Generation 911 Firewalls | \$ 45,000 | Funded by reserve funds. |
| Solacom Switch to Next Generation 911 | \$ 30,000 | Funded by reserve funds. |
| Solacom Test Environment for NG 911 | \$ 150,000 | Funded by reserve funds. |
| Paving – Public Safety Operations Building Entrance | \$ 350,000 | Funded by grant funding. |
| Total: | <u>\$ 2,365,000</u> | |

OVERALL FINANCIAL IMPACT:

| | 2023 | 2024 | \$ Change | % Change |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Total Expenditure: | \$ 6,234,935 | \$ 9,336,528 | \$ 3,101,593 | 49.7 % |
| Requisition: | \$ 2,975,663 | \$ 3,273,229 | \$ 297,566 | 10.0 % |

BUDGET INFLUENCES/SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES:

- increase in Contract Services – PSAP 9-1-1 call taking services.
- increase to Contract Services – Fire Dispatch services.
- repayment of long-term MFA debt issued in 2022 to support IUI Strategy.
- Computer Aided Dispatch replacement; procurement to occur in 2024.
- Installation of two new communications sites in 2024 (Buckhorn and Ness Lake).
- Tower inspections in 2024 (5-year cycle).
- Next Generation 911 compliance cost impacts.
- Significant capital projects in 2024, as noted in Capital Projects of Note.

- Additional Information Technology support costs.
- UBCM NG911 Grant Funding and resulting transfers to reserve.
- ongoing scheduled life-cycle replacement of FOCC Emergency Management technology and communication infrastructure.
- overall budget increase due to increased operating costs, capital projects in 2024, and the preparation for the transition to NG911.

Respectfully submitted,

“Melanie Perrin”

Melanie Perrin
Manager of Public Safety Operations

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