
Halifax Regional Council

July 16, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 3, 2002

SUBJECT: Pricing Agreement/ CDPD Airtime Police

ORIGIN

At the July 13, 1999, meeting of Halifax Regional Council, a report was brought forward for the replacement of the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) used by Halifax Regional Police. The report included a number of recommendations. The first recommendation was that the aging MDT's be replaced with laptop computers that make use of Cellular Digital Packet Data (CDPD). The second recommendation was that the new laptop/CDPD solution be procured through a sole source agreement with MTT (Aliant) Mobility. The third recommendation had to do with the financing of the transition. Council approved the staff recommendations, the project proceeded and is operational.

The proposal, as presented, included a discussion of the air time costs for the use of the CDPD network. The time period contained in the initial proposal will lapse in the near future so staff have asked Aliant to provide us with a price agreement on the rates for the next 2 years. Aliant continues to be the sole provider of this technology over the coverage area required by the Regional Police.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve a sole source pricing agreement with Aliant Wireless, an Aliant Company, for a period of 2 years from the date of signing of the agreement. The contract is estimated to have a total annual value of between \$60,000 and \$120,000 per year, based on the amount of airtime used by the police service. Funds for this contract exist in the current Police Services operating budget.

BACKGROUND

When the CDPD system was chosen as the method of transporting data to police vehicles in the field, testing was done as to the coverage area and the technology generally. To date the system has proven to be an excellent choice. This recommendation should be seen as an effort to confirm a fee schedule for the service to which we are already committed for the next two years.

Since 1999 other companies have been developing systems that could be used to broadcast the data; however, for about two and a half years none will have the coverage area for this use that the current Aliant system has. If and when those kinds of systems are available, and should a business case reflect that is appropriate, it would be a simple matter to change the existing communications cards to a new process for a cost of about \$2,000 per unit.

DISCUSSION

Legal services have reviewed the agreement and approved it's contents as to law and approved the text. Just as was the case in 1999 there is no alternative source for this service and without a great deal of additional expense, the technology is the only one available at this time. The term of the price agreement is such that it will allow for a review of the technology and the available systems at a future date. Since the implementation of the laptop program, staff have been able to evaluate the capacity of the system and the availability of the lines. At this time the network is not only adequate for existing uses, but the existing CDPD technology is and will be, compatible with specifications for the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and the Records Management System (RMS) now in development.

The pricing schedule allows for usage amounts per unit from 1 megabit to 50 megabits on a varying price scale. The agreement also allows for some pooling, that is to say that if one unit uses more than it's allotted amount, the over usage will not result in an extra fee but, will be offset by the other's unused capacity. The fee being proposed in the new agreement is the same price that has been in effect since 1999 and the agreement provides that if any other customer gets a better rate in the future that rate will be passed on to HRM. Finally, with regard to the pricing, it is noted that an opportunity exists in the new pricing agreement to increase the airtime available per unit to 5 times the current level for only about a 25% increase in cost.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

If council accepts the staff recommendation there would not be any budget impact. The funds for this service are budgeted in P405-6204.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

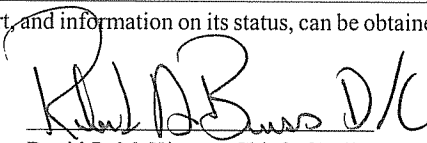
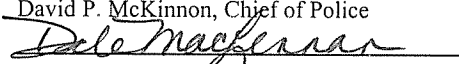
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating Reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could ask staff to examine other technological approaches to the data transmission issue; however, in staff's opinion, in terms of options, the environment is not different from what the situation was when the matter was first brought before Council and any alternative method would have a hardware and software expense beyond the current planned costs.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.		
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