

Municipality of East Ferris

Report to Council

Report No.: FD-2024-03

Date: September 24, 2024

Originator: Steph Amyotte, Fire Chief

Subject: Paging System Upgrades

RECOMMENDATION

That Council for the Municipality of East Ferris approves the purchase of equipment and services from Spectrum Group to supply and install all materials and labour specified in Option 2, to upgrade the paging system for East Ferris Fire and Emergency Services. The upgrade would be to a digital system on our own paging channel, all in one stage for an estimated cost of \$42,000.00 plus HST.

BACKGROUND

Central Ambulance Communication Center (CACC) has requested we be removed from the use of the Ministry of Health (MOH) channel for fire department paging. During deliberations of the 2024 budget, Council approved a recommendation by the Fire Chief to move ahead with the proposed upgrades to the fire paging system. The approved amount was \$15,000.00. After some additional research it was found that the proposed recommendation would not work, and some equipment parts are already no longer available. Because of this, a new proposal is being made to improve the paging system. The proposed upgrades would also improve communications for the Public Works Department. The better communication coverage between Public Works (PW) and the Fire Service would be an asset during a large-scale municipal emergency.

For further project details, see Appendix 'A'.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An additional \$27,000.00 is being requested to upgrade the paging system all at once. There are other options to complete the work in stages; however, if it's done in stages, additional costs will be incurred. No matter which option is approved, there will be an ongoing monthly tower rental and network connection fee totaling \$300.00 per month.

To fund the additional expense, there are funds available in the approved 2024 budget for the majority of the incremental cost. There is approximately \$20,000.00 available that has not been used for dry hydrants. Additionally, there is an approximate salvage value of \$2,000.00 for the existing pagers. The net expense would be approximately \$5,000.00.

ANALYSIS/OPTIONS

Option 1: \$1000.00

Leave current equipment and reconfigure system to operate on current fire channel for paging and radio communications.

This option allows us to get off the MOH channel, satisfying CACC and requires no additional funding. However, we would have a loss of coverage North of Quae Quae Rd and into North Bay. This is not a long-term solution, and the loss of coverage is not acceptable.

Option 2: \$42,000.00

The Municipality would purchase a new digital repeater that would be located on Spectrum's tower in North Bay. We would reuse the filters that are currently in use for PW (value of \$6,000.00) and merge the towers together. Thirty (30) new digital pagers would be purchased for the Fire Department and some PW radios would be traded.

This option allows us to get off the MOH channel, satisfying CACC. It would also improve pager and radio coverage for both Fire and PW which is critical during a municipal emergency.

Option 3: \$30,000.00 this year followed by \$12,000.00 in 2025 budget

This is the same as option 2, but we would purchase the pagers this year and repeater next year.

This option allows us to get off the MOH channel, satisfying CACC. However, until the additional repeater is purchased, we would have loss of coverage to the North end and into North Bay.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steph Amyotte
Fire Chief

I concur with this report and recommendation.



Jason Trottier, HBBA, MPA, CPA, CMA
CAO/Treasurer