

ITEM	1
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	50
COUNCIL MEETING	91/09/03

RE: PROPOSED MUNICIPAL RADIO SERVICE  
GVRD BYLAW 672

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the GVRD be informed that the Corporation of the District of Burnaby agrees to participate in the GVRD Municipal Radio Service as described in the letter to Council dated 1991 August 06 from Ms. Nancy Grant, Secretary to the GVRD Board, and as further described in GVRD Bylaw 672.

Purpose:

To request Council's approval to allow Burnaby to participate with other municipalities in a proposed radio service.

REPORT

Introduction

Appearing on the agenda for the 1991 September 03 Council meeting is a letter from the GVRD regarding a proposed radio service for its member municipalities. This is being referred to Council for consideration because the GVRD is seeking enabling legislation from the Provincial Government through the adoption of an extended services bylaw which has already been given first and second readings by the GVRD Board of Directors. Third reading will follow when it has been determined which member municipalities want to be participants in this service that is being proposed.

Background Information

The Burnaby Fire and Engineering Departments are experiencing problems with radios that they presently use in their day-to-day operations. These problems are primarily related to interference, congestion and a lack of additional channels for expansion. A majority of other municipalities in our region have also encountered these problems. An initiative by the GVRD to find a solution eventually led to discussions with the Federal Department of Communications (DOC) on the possibility of creating a dedicated public safety band in the 800 MHz range for the exclusive use of municipalities in the Greater Vancouver area. These discussions were concluded with an understanding that the DOC will make such a band available. We are now at a point where each municipality in the area is being requested to advise whether or not it wishes to participate in the proposal.

It is the opinion of staff that Burnaby should participate because the proposal would allow the Fire and Engineering Departments to upgrade their radio systems and thereby become more efficient and effective in the overall management and execution of the work for which they are accountable. These Departments frequently respond to emergencies and for such responses to be made in a timely manner, personnel must be able to communicate by radio without experiencing "fade-out" and interference (by way of example, our Fire Department has to frequently contend with high pitched screeching sounds on its existing frequency and also a situation where it picks up calls that are being internally made by the Fire Department in Bellevue, Washington; experts have been unable to identify the causes but it is entirely likely that the proposal would lead to a remedy of these two troublesome types of interference). The proposed service would permit Burnaby to communicate by radio with other fire and engineering departments in adjacent municipalities, and would also provide a direct radio contact with the Fire Commissioner's Office in Victoria.

The Burnaby RCMP are not affected by this proposal in that they have their own channels and means of communicating by radio with counterparts in other municipalities.

As noted in the letter from the GVRD, the total cost for all participating municipalities would not exceed \$60,000. This is a first year start-up cost. Based on a pro rata sharing with other municipalities, Burnaby's share would be approximately \$10,691. It is estimated that future recurring annual costs would be approximately one-half this amount. Burnaby's share would be included in the annual GVRD levy and would therefore not be included in departmental budgets.

Burnaby would not immediately convert to the dedicated public safety band. Such conversion would take place when it becomes necessary to replace existing radio systems. What is important is that by committing to the band now, it will be available for our use whenever it is required in the future.

The proposed service, which has been approved by the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee (a body comprised of all municipal managers in our region), is scheduled to become effective in January, 1992.

Conclusion

This proposal is unique in that it would be the first of its kind to be allowed by the DOC in Canada, and also a "last chance" offer in that if it is not implemented now, the available band will almost certainly be assigned to other applicants and would therefore not be available to GVRD municipalities in the future.

As past experience has shown, benefits can be derived when municipalities in the Lower Mainland cooperate with one another on matters of mutual interest and concern. This particular cooperative endeavour is one in which municipalities, by working in concert with one another, can achieve significant enhancements to their radio systems and thereby improve their service to the public. It is therefore recommended that Burnaby accept the offer from the GVRD to participate in the proposed radio service.

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- c.c. Director Administrative and Community Services
- Director Engineering
- Director Finance
- Fire Chief