



Meeting 2009 October 05

COUNCIL REPORT

**FINANCE AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council authorize an expenditure of up to \$17,000 from the Gaming Reserve Funds to create three (3) amateur radio “Grab-and-Go” portable radio communications kits capable of communications on HF, VHF and UHF frequencies.
2. THAT Council authorize an expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Gaming Reserve Funds to replace the current non-programmable portable UHF radio equipment with multi-channel, programmable portable UHF radios.

**REPORT**

The Finance and Civic Development Committee, at its meeting held on 2009 September 24, received and adopted the *attached* report seeking Council’s funding approval to create three portable radio communications kits and replace the current non-programmable portable UHF radio equipment with multi-channel, programmable portable UHF radios. This equipment will improve public safety by improving communications between site responders and site support in the Emergency Operations Centre during an emergency response.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston  
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow  
Vice Chair

Councillor C. Jordan  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Director Finance Risk Manager
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
FINANCE AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2009 July 08

**FROM:** DIRECTOR FINANCE

**SUBJECT:** EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS

**PURPOSE:** To improve public safety: by improving communications between site responders and site support in the Emergency Operations Centre through HF, VHF and UHF radio communications during an emergency response.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council authorize an expenditure of up to \$17,000 from the Gaming Reserve Funds to create three (3) amateur radio "Grab-and-Go" portable radio communications kits capable of communications on HF, VHF and UHF frequencies.
2. **THAT** Council authorize an expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Gaming Reserve Funds to replace the current non-programmable portable UHF radio equipment with multi-channel, programmable portable UHF radios.

**REPORT****OVERVIEW**

First responders to an emergency depend on communications in order for their response to succeed. In the event of a major emergency, disaster or calamity, it is expected that normal communications via telephone, including cellular, will likely be compromised. The duration of the service disruption will depend on the nature and severity of the crisis and the telephone utility's ability to recover and restore their infrastructure to operating levels. The ability of incident responders to communicate in real time is critical to establishing command and control at the scene of an emergency, to maintaining event situational awareness, and to operating overall within a broad range of incidents.

UHF is widely used by public service agencies, including fire, police and engineering, for two-way radio communication. Technological advancements in this frequency spectrum have evolved over the years, particularly with the migration of communication networks to include digital capabilities.

As proven during recent disasters (Summer 2003 BC Interior Firestorm, August 2005 Hurricane Katrina) and, more recently and closer to home, emergencies (January 2009 Flooding of Chilliwack), telephone communications are easily compromised and restoration of services may be delayed. Amateur radio volunteers are able to provide a communications lifeline between impacted populations, first responders and emergency operations centres (EOC).

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From: Director Finance  
Re: Emergency Planning Projects  
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Well equipped "Grab-and-Go" Kits accessible to these public safety volunteers will permit the mobilization and set-up of a communications network which will aid support response and recovery efforts not only at the incident site, but at Reception Centres, Resiliency or Recovery Centres and the EOC.

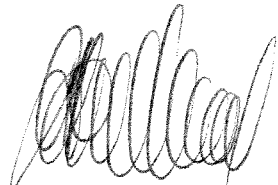
The request for Gaming Reserve Funds will cover the following projects:

1. Portable UHF Radios
  - Replacement of the Motorola HT440 portable UHF radios with Icom IC-F24 handheld radios.
  - The current portable UHF radios available for use in the Burnaby EOC have exceeded their useful life. The radios are limited to four (4) channel programmability, the frequency range of these units is restricted by their crystals, technology which is now antiquated, and the 12 volt NiCd batteries no longer hold a charge sufficient for long term use.
  - The proposed replacement radios would cover a wider frequency range than the current units, multiple channel "on-the-fly" programmability, and Li-Ion battery packs.
  
2. Amateur Radio "Grab-an-Go" Kits
  - Creation of three (3) amateur radio "Grab-and-Go" kits to be stored at locations across the City; North Burnaby, Central Burnaby, South Burnaby. Equipment to include HF, UHF and VHF radio equipment, portable antennas, and magnetic antenna mounts.
  - These kits will promote the ability of emergency response providers and relevant government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters and to ensure, accelerate, and attain interoperable emergency communications City-wide.

**CONCLUSION**

Communications investments are among the most significant, substantial, and long-lasting capital investments that agencies make. Equipment to ensure the means and operability of communications will serve public safety in the City during emergencies, disasters or calamities.

It is, therefore, recommended that an allocation of up to \$32,000 be authorized to finance the costs for these initiatives from the Gaming Reserve Funds.

  
Rick Earle  
DIRECTOR FINANCE

RAE:cp

Copied to: City Manager