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**TO:** CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2013 January 25

**FROM:** DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: E-COMM POLICE DISPATCH SERVICE**

**PURPOSE:** To seek Council's approval to enter into a service agreement with E-COMM for police dispatch service in Burnaby.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** Council approve the use of E-COMM for police dispatch service in Burnaby and staff be authorized to enter into a service agreement based on the terms and conditions outlined in this report.

**REPORT**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Public safety is important to the quality of life and personal security in a community and it is often associated with the quality of police services provided. The City has a contract with the Province for RCMP to deliver police service for the City. Under the contract, the City provides civilian support services to the RCMP in order to allow police members devote their effort and time to policing work.

To continue to provide quality police service in Burnaby in a cost effective and operation efficient manner, staff have reviewed the current police call taking and dispatch service model and are advancing a new service strategy to Council for consideration and approval.

**2. BACKGROUND**

In the late 1990's, E-COMM was established as the emergency communication centre for southwest British Columbia under the Emergency Communications Corporation Act. All 911 calls generated within the southwest region of British Columbia are connected to E-COMM for direct emergency dispatch of police and/or fire service for communities that have a dispatch service contract with E-COMM or for call transfer to local communities that do not have a dispatch service contract with E-COMM for local dispatch (Burnaby service model).

E-COMM currently manages more than 1 Million 911 emergency calls each year. Its service is 24/7, 365 days a year. In 2013, there are 30 Police and Fire Departments subscribed to the E-COMM dispatch service. Currently, Burnaby is not a member of E-COMM's dispatch service.

As part of the City support services to the RCMP operations, Burnaby maintains an Operations Communication Centre (OCC) within the Burnaby detachment building. This OCC division is supported by one manager and 32 communication operators, and it handles all 911 calls transferred from E-COMM and non-emergency calls that come directly to the detachment. The annual call volume managed by the Burnaby OCC is approximately 58,000.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE POLICE DISPATCH SERVICE MODEL**

#### **3.1 Alternative Service Model**

Although Burnaby OCC is providing an adequate level of service to the RCMP, the division is facing multiple challenges with respect to aging equipment, spatial constraints, staff recruitment and capital upgrades. These challenges have prompted the City to re-examine its existing OCC service model and to evaluate alternative business model that may offer possible cost savings and improved service efficiency and reliability.

To conduct the service evaluation, staff investigated the advisability of retaining E-COMM for the police dispatch service. Presently, Burnaby is a member of E-COMM in the police area-wide radio system therefore it would be a natural extension of the City's existing membership to include police dispatch service if it is economically viable.

E-COMM is located on Pender Street, south of the PNE grounds in Vancouver. The organization is operated on a cost recovery basis and is owned by its members. It employs about 400 staff members with the flexibility to provide a higher level coverage during major events. The City received a proposal from E-COMM in January 2013 to provide police dispatch service in Burnaby. Staff and Burnaby CUPE Local 23 representatives have reviewed the proposed service and met with E-COMM staff to discuss the service details and staff transfer. Key advantages of retaining E-COMM for police dispatch service in Burnaby include:

- Better cross communication between agencies in different municipalities in real time;
- Larger workforce for better staff coverage during major and extended events;
- Purpose built earthquake resistant infrastructure;
- Enhanced security;
- Economies of scale;
- Enhanced service cost effectiveness to Burnaby.

### 3.2 Finance and Contract Terms

E-COMM has submitted a proposal to the City for police dispatch service. The cost of the service for the full year of 2013 is \$2,477,800 which will result in approximately \$100,000 cost savings to the City. Key terms of the proposal are highlighted below:

- E-COMM will handle all police emergency 911 and non emergency call taking and dispatch;
- E-COMM will maintain Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) additions/deletions outside of Burnaby's normal business day. During normal business hours, there are Burnaby staff dedicated to maintaining the CPIC data;
- The E-COMM Emergency Event Map Viewer will be made available to Burnaby. The secured connection will allow the Watch Commander or OIC view all active police events on a map with a brief description of the events.
- E-COMM will provide regular reports (report frequency to be established by Burnaby) on calls answered, duration and service level targets;
- E-COMM's bargaining unit employees are represented by CUPE Local 873. Existing Burnaby Communication Operators (full time and auxiliary) will be offered comparable position in E-COMM as part of the service transfer and will receive similar remuneration, benefits and the ability to maintain their seniority. A total of 32 Burnaby Com Op positions will be transferred to E-COMM;
- A 3 to 6 months of lead time to prepare for the service transfer is required;
- The dispatch levy for 2013 is \$2,477,800 and the actual levy for 2013 will be prorated on the basis of the actual service transfer date;
- The 2014 and 2015 levies are expected to increase 3.5% to 4% annually subject to the final budget approved by the E-COMM Board of Directors.

### 3.3 RCMP and Union Consultation

Staff have consulted with senior members of RCMP and CUPE Local 23 on the alternative service model and engaged them in meetings with E-COMM to discuss the service details. RCMP Burnaby Detachment Chief Superintendent Critchley is in agreement with the transfer of the OCC operations to E-COMM, and CUPE Local 23 is prepared to work with E-COMM towards developing a transition plan that will meet the needs of its members. Final details of the Union members transfer and position resettlement will be worked out after the E-COMM proposal is accepted by Council.

Subject to Council approval of the E-COMM proposal, staff would work with the Burnaby Detachment team to identify possible future use and reallocation of the existing OCC space for RCMP operations. Cost of the spatial improvement works will be carefully reviewed and if necessary, a further report will be presented to Council for consideration.

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#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

City workers have always been a key part of the police service model in the City of Burnaby and will continue to be a vital function of Burnaby's police service. Today, there are 128 City staff members working in the RCMP Burnaby detachment providing support services that include police record management, IT support, victim services, youth services, crime prevention, crime analysis, call taking/dispatch and clerical works. Challenges to continue to provide quality communication services to the Burnaby RCMP members in a cost effective manner have prompted the City to examine the feasibility of the regional E-COMM service model.

Discussions with E-COMM in the past several months have led to the conclusion that E-COMM can provide a cost efficient and operational effective business model to Burnaby. In addition to the enhanced security and larger work force benefits of E-COMM operations, its service package will offer some cost savings (operating and capital improvements) to the City. E-COMM was established in the late 1990's under the Emergency Communication Corporation Act. In the past decade, E-COMM has grown and become a matured organization with an excellent business model and effective management. Staff are confident that E-COMM can provide a cost effective police dispatch service to Burnaby without compromising public safety and the quality service provided by Burnaby RCMP members. Today, E-COMM provides dispatch service to 30 Police and Fire departments including Vancouver, Richmond, West Vancouver, Maple Ridge, Squamish, Whistler, etc.

Having completed a review of the E-COMM proposal and a consultation process with RCMP and CUPE Local 23, staff recommend that Council approve the use of E-COMM for police dispatch service and authorize staff to enter into an agreement up to a 5 – year term with E-COMM based on the contract and financial conditions as outlined in this report.

Lambert Chu, P.Eng.  
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

LSC:

Copied to: RCMP Burnaby Detachment OIC Chief Superintendent Dave Critchley  
CUPE Local 23 President  
Director Finance  
City Solicitor  
Acting Human Resources Director