



# REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor Schaffer and Councillors**

Subject **Langley City Fire Service Emergency  
Communications Services Enabling Bylaw**

Report #: 17-038

From: Rory Thompson, Fire Chief

File #: 7202.00

Doc #:

Date: July 5, 2017

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## RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT City Council approve the purchase of one (1) Class A share in E-Comm.
- 2) THAT City Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer and the Corporate Officer to execute the Agreement to be Bound on behalf of the City.

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## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the steps to be taken in order for the City to become a user of the E-Comm 700-MHz radio system.

## POLICY:

N/A

## COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

Emergency Communications for British Columbia Incorporated ("E-Comm") operates the largest multi-jurisdictional, tri-service emergency wide-area radio system in the province that is used by police, fire and ambulance personnel within Metro Vancouver and parts of the Fraser Valley.

Advantages of the E-Comm radio system include:

- Cross communication between police, fire and emergency health personnel within the same community
- Cross communication between agencies in different municipalities
- Wider radio coverage area
- Better in-building coverage
- Greater clarity
- Improved reliability
- Enhanced security
- Earthquake resistant infrastructure

At present Langley City Fire Rescue Service (LCFRS) has no cross communication ability with RCMP and BC Ambulance Service. LCFRS' primary mutual aid partner (Township of Langley) will be switching to the E-Comm system early in 2018.

LCFRS' current radio system has coverage and building penetration issues. Switching to E-Comm is essential to improve safety and department inter-operability.

In the 2017 budget, Council approved funding in the operating budget for LCFRS to transition to the new E-Comm radio system. In order to become a user of the new radio system, a municipality must take two steps:

- 1) Purchase one (1) E-Comm Class A share. This must be authorized through a municipal bylaw.; and
- 2) Sign an agreement to be bound by the terms and conditions of the shared members agreement.

Upon purchasing a Class A share, Langley City will join the list of current users who are transitioning onto the new 700 MHz radio system. It is estimated that local testing for our department will occur in October 2017 and we will transition onto the new system along with the Township of Langley in February or March 2018.

### **Governance:**

E-Comm is governed by a Board of Directors. Surrey, White Rock and the Township of Langley together share two seats on the Board of Directors. Current practice is for Surrey to hold one seat with White Rock and the Township of Langley alternating holding the other seat. Upon purchasing a Class A share, the City of Langley will join this nominating group.

E-Comm writes shareholders in March of each year, asking them to nominate individuals to sit on the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held each June. Langley City will have one vote at the AGM with the purchase of one Class A share. Rotation of the nominating group nominee is at the discretion of the group. Practice has been to keep a shared Director in place for several years due to the learning curve involved in becoming a Board member.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

The purchase price for one (1) E-Comm share is \$10.

The annual cost for use of the radio system is based on a formula contained within Annex C of the Member`s Agreement. Factors included within the formula include:

- a) Area (50%);
- b) Radio traffic (20%);
- c) Number of radios (20%); and
- d) Population (10%)

In 2017, the City added \$86,570 to the Fire Rescue annual operating budget for use of the E-Comm radio system. This budget amount includes lease and replacement of the radios.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

Keep the current radio system.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Rory Thompson, Fire Chief

Attachment(s):

- a) Langley City Fire Rescue Service Emergency Communications Services Enabling Bylaw, 2017
- b) Agreement to be Bound

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:**

I support the recommendation.



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Francis Cheung, P. Eng.  
Chief Administrative Officer