



Regional Board Report

Request for Decision

To: Regional Board

From: Director, Community Services

Date: February 2, 2023

Subject: E-Comm 9-1-1 / Next Generation NG9-1-1 Update

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s. 208)*

Purpose: To provide Regional District of Central Okanagan Board with a brief history, structure, current contract status of the E-Comm 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) service and give an update on the federally mandated transition to the Next Generation 911 (NG9-1-1)

Executive Summary:

In April 2014, joined by eight Southeast BC Regional Districts, the Regional District of Central Okanagan Board approved the migration from the RCMP Southeast District Operational Call Center (OCC) and entered into a contract with E-Comm 9-1-1. The duration of the initial contract was for five (5) years with five (5) optional extension years. Currently the Regional District and our partners are in the process of executing the 4th extension while we await cost details for the mandated transition to NG9-1-1.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board receives the Report from the Director of Community Services, dated February 2, 2023, with respect to the update on the E-Comm 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) program for information;

AND THAT the Chair advocate on behalf of the Regional Board with the Union of B.C. Municipalities and the Minister of Public Safety for assistance with Next Generation 9-1-1 program funding

Respectfully submitted by: David Gazley, Manager Protective Services

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Cashin".

Todd Cashin,
Director Community Services

Attachment(s): 1. BCUMC Letter to Minister Public Safety – February 15th, 2022
 2. Minister Farnsworth Response – April 1st, 2022
 3. Board Powerpoint Presentation

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Priorities: Sustainable Communities, Economic Development

Values: Collaboration, Good Governance

Background:

For many years the Regional Districts in the Southeast area of British Columbia had initial 9-1-1 call answer services provided by the RCMP Primary Safety Answering Point (PSAP) located in Kelowna at the Southeast District Operational Call Centre (OCC). This initial emergency call answering service included RDCO and City of Kelowna employees as well as Civilian RCMP members. Depending on the type of emergency the Southeast District OCC would transfer calls to the applicable Secondary Public Safety Answering Points (SSAP) including Southeast District RCMP Detachments, Kelowna Regional Fire Dispatch, or BC Ambulance.

In 2012 the RCMP advised all regional districts in the province that initial 9-1-1 call answer services were not part of their core business and that if they continued, they wanted full cost recovery. The result of this change would have been a huge cost increase in 2013 and onward to cover all the related staffing costs. The RCMP then set a deadline of December 31, 2013, to sign a new MOU, or find an alternative primary PSAP service provider.

RDCO Contract

Joined by eight Southeast BC Regional Districts, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was placed which resulted in three (3) responses from E-Comm 9-1-1, the City of Kelowna, and the City of Surrey. On April 28, 2014, the Regional District of Central Okanagan received approval to negotiate a contract with E-Comm 9-1-1 on behalf of the partnering regional districts.

The key drivers for a new partner contract with E-Comm 9-1-1 were based on a cost savings of more than 2.1 million (25%) in operating costs over 5 years based on the 2012 rate.. Excessive administrative overhead costs, the nature of newly proposed service costs, the expensive RCMP IP interconnection, and a clear indication the RCMP were getting out of the 9-1-1 business, all played a role in this decision. In addition, if accepted, regional districts would now be in a better position to take advantage of the future move to NG9-1-1.

On behalf of their eight (8) partner regional districts November 18th, 2014, the RDCO entered a five-year contract with E-Comm 9-1-1 including up to five (5) one-year extension agreements. We are in our fourth extension and in 2024 it will be our last and final extension.

Call Volumes

RDCO 9-1-1 call volumes increased 33% between 2017 to 2021 going from 252,135 calls to 336,155 calls. Although call answering remains on target, all regions call volumes have increased an average of 13.3%, since 2020. The E-Comm 9-1-1 Service Level continues to be 95% of calls answered within 10

seconds, however the average handling time has risen significantly, especially to BC Ambulance, which has delayed dispatch of emergency services.

E-Comm 9-1-1's integrated multi-jurisdictional call taking, and dispatch centre provides economy of scale. In addition, it has several backup provisions to ensure continuity of 9-1-1 services in several scenarios. In 2013, E-Comm 9-1-1 advised that 98% of emergency calls were answered in five seconds or less. The National Emergency Number Association standard was to answer 90% of calls within ten seconds.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)

A federally mandated, complete modernisation of Canada's 30-year-old 9-1-1 telecommunications technology network will result in a more advanced system to access emergency service. NG9-1-1 will have Internet Protocol technology and real time GIS based coordinates and location abilities. This is contrary to the old system which doesn't meet public expectations, uses analogue networks and long outdated technologies.

A set of functional improvements such as more precise location determination, ability to transfer emergency calls across Canada, and sending real-time text to 9-1-1 operators are a few of the new capabilities. This will give a platform for a wide range of possible emergency response functionalities, which over time can improve:

- Diversity-specific response
- Health condition-specific responses (e.g., for mental health)
- Greater service equity for rural and remote communities, including indigenous communities

On March 1, 2022, NG9-1-1 voice services launched across Canada by the designated NG9-1-1 network providers – TELUS, Bell Canada, and SaskTel. Ability to send texts to 9-1-1 is planned to be available by April 16, 2024, and the decommissioning of the old 9-1-1 networks must be completed by March 4, 2025.

Next Steps

As part of the five year financial planning process, Finance staff will be providing an information report to the Board which outline commitments (including the E-Comm 9-1-1 commitment).

It is anticipated the provincial government will work out details of the new Provincial Call Taking Levy help manage the NG9-1-1 costs provincially. These costs need to be better understood and in place prior to the 5th and final contract extension in 2024.

Considerations:

Organizational/External:

The Regional District of Central Okanagan oversees the E-Comm 9-1-1 contract and negotiates on behalf of our Regional District partners in the Southeast of BC

Financial:

All costs are shared between the eight (8) Regional District partners who provide annual funding based on population allocations.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority

Approved for Agenda



Brian Reardon, CAO
