



Regional Board Report

Information

Approved for Board Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

To: Regional Board

From: Todd Cashin
Director, Community Services

Date: February 28, 2022

Subject: E-Comm 9-1-1 Service - Update

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors - Unweighted Corporate Vote - Simple Majority - LGA 208*

Purpose: To provide the Regional District of Central Okanagan Board with a brief history, structure, current contract status and future updates regarding the E-Comm 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Service.

Executive Summary:

In April 2014, the Regional District of Central Okanagan Board received approval to migrate from the RCMP and enter into direct negotiations with E-Comm 9-1-1 on behalf of eight (8) other Southeast BC Regional District PSAP partners. The duration of the contract was for 5 years with five optional extensions. Currently we are on the 3rd extension while we await details and transformation over to Next-generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1.)

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board receives the E-Comm 9-1-1 Service – Update report from the Director of Community Services, dated February 28th, 2022, for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

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

Todd Cashin
Director Community Services»

Prepared by: David Gazley, Manager Protective Services

Attachment: 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. This emergency call answering service was inclusive of RDCO and City of Kelowna employees as well as Civilian RCMP members. The Southeast District OCC would dispatch calls to the Secondary Public Safety Answering Points (SSAP) including Southeast District RCMP Detachments, Kelowna Regional Fire Dispatch, and BC Ambulance. In mid-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 would be a significant 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 provider.

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 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 new service delivery, 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 NG9-1-1.

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. On November 18th, 2014, the RDCO entered into a five-year contract (on behalf of themselves and their 8 partner RDs) with E-Comm 9-1-1 including up to 5 one-year extension agreements.

RDCO 9-1-1 call volumes rose 33% trending between 2017 to 2021 from 252,135 calls to 336,155 calls. Although call answering remains on target, all regions call volumes have increased 13.3%, since 2020. 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.

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 services. 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 outdated technologies.

A set of functional improvements such as exact 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 service will be launched across Canada by the designated NG9-1-1 network providers – TELUS, Bell Canada, and SaskTel. Ability to send texts to 9-1-1 will be made available by April 16, 2024, and the decommissioning of the old 9-1-1 networks must be completed by March 4, 2025.

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:
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