



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-242

From: Sean Cairns, Protective Services Manager

Date: October 5, 2023

Subject: Contract Award: Portable Spare Fire Radio Repeater

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Weighted]

That the Regional Board authorize an agreement with Petron Communications Ltd., by direct award, to purchase a Portable Codan P25/Analog Repeater to a maximum cost of \$46,725 (excluding taxes), to be paid from Function 305 – 911 Emergency Telephone System; and further, that the Chair and Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the Peace River Regional District.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

In 2022 the Regional Board approved the replacement and modernization of the fire department radio repeater system. The new repeater equipment will accommodate existing conventional VHF radios and add P25 (public safety) digital radio technology. In addition, the new equipment will allow for Mission Critical Push to Talk (MCPTT) integration which would allow compatible fire department radios to communicate with each other and dispatch when in areas without conventional radio coverage by using LTE cellular coverage or Wi-Fi. The new system is currently being installed and is expected to be operational by the end of 2023.

During this upgrade project, staff observed numerous supply chain issues and delays in the procurement of radio repeaters, networking equipment, and the sourcing of other specialized equipment used in the radio repeater system. If one of the repeater sites goes down due to a natural event (such as wildfire) or an equipment failure, there could be significant delays in replacing equipment and restoring service. The radio repeater network is equipped with a backup paging and communication systems located at each fire hall for use if a radio repeater tower goes out of service. This system has limited capacity in terms of distance and coverage and is primarily intended for paging as opposed to two-way communications. A portable repeater would allow full communication services to be rapidly restored until repairs to the normal repeater could be completed.

Staff has been working with the project contractor, Petron Communications Ltd., to procure a portable repeater that can be quickly deployed and integrated with the new repeater network if a repeater site is disrupted.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

\$50,000 was included in the 2023 capital budget for Function 305 – 911 Emergency Telephone System for the purchase of a portable repeater.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Petron Communications Ltd. is the sole provider of both Codan and Harris products in our region and, as a result, is the only source of equipment that is compatible with the new repeater system. The PRRD's Procurement Policy permits the Regional Board to make a direct award. Trade treaties do not apply as the purchase is under \$75,000.