



CITY OF
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

**Request for Decision
Regular Council Meeting – May 14, 2024**

Municipal Enforcement AFRRCS Radio System

Motion:

That Council amend the 2024 Capital Budget by allocating \$60,000 from the Protective Services Equipment Reserve for the purpose of upgrading the Municipal Enforcement radio system.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information for the need to upgrade the technology of the Municipal Enforcement Services (MES) radio system to allow access to the RCMP encrypted channels, which will enhance communications between MES and RCMP.

Background:

In 2018, a Capital Budget Request was initiated to purchase new radios for Municipal Enforcement Services. The Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRRCS) was the solution, and we purchased 12 portable radios and 6 radios for the cars and dispatch. While the AFRRCS system is the same radio system used by the RCMP, back in 2018, MES was not permitted access to their encrypted channels. The previous radio system allowed for the RCMP and MES to be on the same radio channels, however, the RCMP moved to the AFRRCS radio system and Community Peace Officers were not allowed on the same radio channels as the RCMP.

In October 2023, Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services and RCMP came to an agreement that allows MES access to the RCMP encrypted channels. Fort Saskatchewan is on the list to have access to these encrypted channels; however our technology of the current MES radios needs to be upgraded before we can make this change.

Summary Analysis:

RCMP and MES share office space, dispatch services and support staff, where it is important that both services have their own channel to work off so that radio traffic is kept to a minimum. It is also important that both services could communicate directly with each other for the following reasons:

1. Day-to-day communications - Communication between RCMP and MES is stifled because the officers must route all communication through dispatch personnel, and there is no direct communication between front-line officers.
2. Officer safety – MES and RCMP work closely together providing assistance to each other on a daily basis. These officers work together to provide public safety, traffic safety enforcement, and to offer back-up for each other when needed.
3. Joint operations - joint traffic operations with the RCMP are more difficult without the ability to communicate effectively through radios. During joint traffic operations, a spotter will

relay information to other officers waiting for the violator and this becomes difficult when officers are using two different radio systems.

4. Motor vehicle collisions – MES assists the RCMP with traffic control at collisions in the city, especially at larger intersections. Direct radio communications are a benefit to quick and concise communication to ensure the safety of the officers and the public.
5. Emergency Management – in the event of an emergency disaster within the municipality it is important for MES and the RCMP to have direct communications.

Financial Implications:

The cost to upgrade the MES AFRRC radios is \$60,000, funded from the Protective Services Equipment Reserve. The initial lifecycle replacement of the AFRRCS radio system was 10 years, leaving 5 years before the radios would have been assessed for replacement. The upgraded radios will be assessed in 5 years to determine if they need replacement.

Internal/External Impacts:

This request impacts both MES and the RCMP front line officers who are performing duties in our community to keep everyone safe. Municipal Enforcement will use a contractor to upgrade the radio system and then KDIV RCMP will be allowing access to the encrypted channels. This work should be completed by the end of 2024.

Diversity Impacts:

Protective Services is dedicated to fostering an environment where all individuals, regardless of their background, identity, or lived experiences, feel valued, respected, and empowered. By embracing diversity, we enrich our organization and enhance our ability to effectively serve and protect the communities we are entrusted to serve.

Risk Analysis:

If this motion is not approved MES and RCMP will continue to communicate through the dispatchers within the Detachment. This creates a barrier to quick and concise communication that links the front-line Peace Officers with the RCMP Officers.

Plans/Standards/Legislation:

Public safety is integral to the Strategic Plan as it contributes to fostering a safe and inclusive community, aligning with the City's strategic objective of operational excellence aimed at enhancing service quality and efficiency.

City's Strategic Plan:

Goal - Welcoming, Compassionate and Active Community (support diverse community needs to create a complete community where everyone, regardless of circumstances is able to experience all the City has to offer).

Goal - Operational Excellence and Continuous Improvement (continuous improvement; constantly looking for ways to improve our services through innovative practices, technology, collaboration, and consultation).

