



## AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL

RFD#

Date:

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**TO:** Mayor Kogon and Members of Amherst Town Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Acting Chief Dwayne Pike

**DATE:** February 4, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Capital Budget 2019/2020 – TMR2 Radio System

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**ORIGIN:** 2019/2020 Capital Budget

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** 37000-01 Procurement Policy and the MGA, Section 65 (z)  
Power to expend money states: *"The council may expend money required by the municipality for...acquisition of equipment, materials, vehicles, machinery, apparatus, implements and plant for a municipal purpose".*

**RECOMMENDATION:** That council approve \$125,000 in the 2019/2020 capital budget to enable the Amherst Police Department to migrate to the TMR2 system

**BACKGROUND:** APD currently utilizes a VHF radio system that has experienced recent technical issues. Radio equipment has reached end of life and cannot be replaced, there has been disruptions experienced in communications and there is no interoperability with other public safety agencies.

**DISCUSSION:** The VHF radio communications system utilized by the Amherst Police Department is approaching end of life. In the past few years, over \$24,000 has been spent on repairs and upgrades to try to ensure that communication systems are effective for police responders. The ability to communicate outside the geographical area is limited and attempts to expand by adding additional radio towers has been unsuccessful. The current system does not have interoperability with other systems with the Cumberland RCMP or our other public safety partners in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. Our communication with most other agencies is limited to passing messages through Amherst Dispatch to RCMP telecoms, or by sharing radio equipment with other members/responders. There is an option to establish a radio link with Truro Telecoms, but this would come at an expense to the town, and would still only enable members to communicate with telecoms, not with other officers directly. As a result, joint responses to large scale incidents or emergencies are severely compromised. To resolve these issues using our current system would be expensive and also does not resolve end of life equipment issues, nor would it provide a complete solution to the issues identified. In August of 2017, as a result of a several accidents/mistakes, network lines were severed and resulted in a widespread outage that affected 911 and emergency services as well as internet, cellular and landline service. As a result of the outage, 911 was only able to make contact with emergency response agencies via the TMR2 network which remained intact.



APD is currently one of the very few Public Safety agencies that is not using the Trunked Mobile Radio System. In Nova Scotia, only Amherst PD and Stellerton/Westville Police have not yet migrated to TMR2, although Stellerton/Westville is in negotiations. In New Brunswick, all agencies with the exception of Grand Falls Police are either already utilizing TMR2 or are in negotiations. In PEI, it is expected that by spring 2019, all police agencies, including UPEI Police, will be on the TMR network. The shift towards this system has occurred because the TMR2 system provides a means of effective communication between agencies and also provides the required infrastructure. Interoperability has been identified several times in recent police reviews including those in PEI (Perivale & Taylor Consulting, 2017) and also in the Independent Review in the June 4<sup>th</sup> Moncton Shootings (Alphonse MacNeil, 2016). In the independent review of the Moncton shootings in 2014, several recommendations were made in relation to radio communications that were experienced during the incident. These included:

- *That the RCMP examine the implementation of encrypted radio systems for operational effectiveness, officer safety and protection of privacy;*
- *That a system be developed, both radio and data, that would allow for communication between RCMP members from the maritime divisions, when required to work outside of their home jurisdiction.*

In March 2017, the PEI *Policing Service Model Review* recommended establishing an Island-wide Police Operations Communication Centre including an integrated Island-wide PIC S2 (TMR2) digital police encrypted radio system used by all police services.

Interoperability and the advantages of Migrating to the TMR2 system also includes access to provincial communication training/support/expertise and access to emergency equipment maintained by Nova Scotia Public Safety. They would also assist with the following;

- *Developing fleetmaps and radio profiles (channels and button configurations) including working with APD and Bell to test all new radio profiles and programming to ensure it is 100 percent correct before any radios are programmed;*
- *Developing a custom training slideshow for APD and delivering it free of charge at time that is convenient to your staff, providing as many sessions as needed to catch all shifts/schedules of APD staff.*
- *Mobile Communication Support Services for large incidents or planned events, with portable repeaters, extra radios, spare batteries, satellite phones, linking capabilities to marine or aircraft radios if ever required. This support is available on a 24/7 365 basis as an on call person always available.*
- *Troubleshooting of any issues encountered;*
- *Assistance decisions relating to correct model of radios and how they should be programmed.*
- *Assistance with encryption decisions and setting up emergency alarms;*
- *Assistance with SOP's with partners such as RCMP and other agencies.*

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** \$125,000.00 from the 2019/2010 Capital Budget (\$50,000 is a carry over from last year as the console project was not required with the TMR2 project).

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** No community engagement is anticipated.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** There are no environmental implications.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** There are no social justice implications.

**ALTERNATIVES:** Do not migrate to the TMR2 system and attempt to find alternate solutions to communications issues, interoperability issues and equipment replacement problems.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Excerpts from: *Crime Prevention and Policing Service Model Review Final Report*, The Province of Prince Edward Island Public Safety Division, Perivale + Taylor Consulting, March 2017;
- 2) Excerpts from: *Independent Review of the Moncton Shooting June 4th, 2014*. Assistant Commissioner Alphonse MacNeil (ret'd), Jan 2016