



**TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** Dec. 23, 2015

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Chris Harrow

**SUBJECT:** Fire Department Radio Purchase

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**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**6.3** - Support the Fire Department's mission to service the community with high standards of emergency response and fire prevention programs to ensure a safe environment for residents and to protect business and local property.

**6.4** - Maintain and enhance the local volunteer fire fighter model in Minto, and take a leadership role in setting the standard for forces for municipalities this size by ensuring training, equipment and vehicles available to volunteers equivalent to any full time fire service.

**BACKGROUND:**

At the 2015 Budget meetings, the topic of Fire Department radios and the County Radio system was discussed. At the time we were in the preliminary stages of moving the Fire Department onto the County Radio system which is the same one Public Works utilizes.

Throughout the year, Fire Departments in the County not on the system determined it would be the proper thing for all departments to join the same radio system. The cost to change all of the equipment in each of the stations was assessed, and coordinated so radios could be purchased together to realize savings through bulk purchasing.

**COMMENTS:**

At the end of 2015, MRC, the radio supplier for the County system notified of us that a price increase was coming to all radio hardware in 2016, mainly because of the drop in the Canadian dollar. On top of this, as an incentive, they offered an additional 10% off their list price as it stands now plus an incentive program offered by Motorola to trade in any existing portable radios and receive a further discount of \$126 per radio. Three of the four departments not already on the system were able to put their numbers together to improve costing.

Minto Fire needs three base radios, 13 truck radios and 50 portable radios. From our calculations, based on our order and the discounts being offered, the Town could realize cost savings of approximately \$20,000 on our order. Staff is asking for permission to join the other Departments to achieve this savings and move onto the County Radio system.

There are many advantages to moving to the newer digital system. Having six of seven departments on the system gives us the ability to be interoperable with each other at any scene or emergency. This extends to Minto Public Works and the County Roads Department who are already on the system. We would have the ability to speak directly with them when the need arises.

Finally, the County Emergency Management channels are on the system. Our ability to be interoperable with the Emergency Operations Centre at the Municipal Office during an emergency would be invaluable. Communicating effectively between municipalities and within the Town was a major concern to be addressed during previous emergency planning exercises.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The quote received before any discounts are applied is \$83,608. As mentioned previously, we are in line to receive approximately \$20,000 in discounts. This item has been placed in the 2016 Capital Budget for the fire department.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Council receives the Fire Chiefs December 23, 2015 report regarding Radio Purchase and that the Fire Chief be permitted to place the order for new radios for the Fire Department to begin the switch over to the County Radio system.

Chris Harrow, Fire Chief