

DATE OF MEETING December 16, 2024

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SUBJECT NEXT GENERATION 911 (NG911) LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH TELUS COMMUNICATIONS INC.

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's approval for the City of Nanaimo to enter into a new agreement with TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS) for the provision of Next Generation 911 (NG911) emergency calling services and dispatch equipment within the City.

Recommendation

Nanaimo Fire Rescue recommends that Council:

1. Authorize the City of Nanaimo to enter into a revised NG911 Local Government Service Agreement (LGA) with TELUS Communications Inc. (the agreement is attached as Appendix A) for a five-year term, with automatic renewals for successive five-year terms; and
2. Authorize the execution of the NG911 Local Government Service Agreement with TELUS Communications Inc., including all subsidiary agreements required, for the provision of NG911 emergency calling services to the residents of the City of Nanaimo.

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulates telecommunications providers, which create the networks that connect 911 calls to emergency call centers. When a 911 call is received, these centers dispatch emergency responders such as police officers, firefighters, and paramedics. However, telecommunications networks have evolved significantly over the years.

Currently, the 911 analog network is limited in terms of data, flexibility, and infrastructure. While this system has been effective for over 30 years, it has reached its limits and can no longer support evolving technologies or meet the public's expectations for a modern 911 system. In response, the CRTC is implementing a country-wide upgrade called NG911.

NG911 is a federally mandated initiative in Canada to modernize 911 networks from traditional systems to Internet Protocol based technology. This upgrade aims to enhance public safety by

providing better caller location information, real-time texting, streaming audio and video, and options for directing calls to various services, including mental health support, beyond the usual emergency services (police, fire, and ambulance). These enhancements will ultimately:

- Be more flexible and resilient during disasters, offering improved network routing options to mitigate outages and reduce vulnerabilities.
- Enhance NG911 call centers to exchange additional data and information with responders, improving call processing times, enhancing situational awareness, and increasing responder safety.

The CRTC has directed all telecom providers to transition to NG911, leveraging advanced telecommunications networks for improved emergency response. In British Columbia, E-Comm, which handles 99% of the province's 911 calls, has a dedicated NG911 program team working on this implementation for the 25 regional districts, municipalities, and contracted partners it serves. The Province of BC has allocated \$90 million to support E-Comm in covering NG911 transition costs for the agencies they support in 911 call-taking and dispatching.

Funding is divided across five streams:

1. **Base Funding Allocation:** \$45,000 for each local government and modern Treaty First Nations to support local NG911 readiness.
2. **Primary PSAP Funding:** \$3.5 million per eligible primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) operating outside the E-Comm system.
3. **Secondary PSAP Funding (Fire Dispatch):** \$3 million per eligible secondary PSAP, limited to fire dispatch.
4. **Secondary PSAP/OCC Funding:** \$500,000 per eligible secondary PSAP or RCMP Operational Communications Centre (OCC) not fully funded by E-Comm.
5. **Future Application-Based Funding:** Starting in 2025, eligible applicants can apply for funding for additional costs related to NG911, such as mapping, GIS, VoIP, satellite connections, and First Nations support.

The City of Nanaimo qualifies for the Base Funding Allocation, and recipients have three years to utilize the allocated funds. The City of Nanaimo intends to use these funds for legal costs associated with finalization of the NG911 LGA and Geographic Information System updates eligible under the program.

NG911 is currently scheduled to begin in March 2025. However, this date has already been delayed due to the complex nature of nationwide NG911 implementation, as well as delays caused by COVID-19. All emergency call centers in the country must transition to the new platform by that date for the system to be fully operational. PSAPs that do not transition to NG911 will not be able to access the new platform until the NG911 transition requirements have been met, meaning they will lose access to the NG911 network. Importantly, PSAPs such as ECOMM and Surrey Fire Dispatch, cannot transition to the NG911 network until the local governments they serve have agreed to the new TELUS NG911 LGA. |

DISCUSSION

In 2021, TELUS, as the Federal Western Canadian representative for NG911, submitted an LGA agreement template pre-approved by the CRTC to respective local governments, to facilitate the onboarding process onto the TELUS new NG911 network. The NG911 LGA outlines the terms and conditions for providing NG911 service between TELUS and local governments within Alberta or British Columbia.

In 2022, the CRTC issued Telecom Order 2022-119, which approved modifications to TELUS' original template agreement, recognizing that finalized agreements would need to be adjusted based on local contexts. The updated draft agreement, which allows for specific terms and conditions for individual local governments, is now ready for execution. This agreement has a five-year term with automatic five-year renewals, unless terminated with six months' notice by either party.

Generally, in the new NG911 framework, Regional Districts are responsible for signing the TELUS LGA agreement on behalf of their respective regions. However, due to the City of Nanaimo co-signing our ECOMM PSAP agreement with the Regional District of Nanaimo and the Cowichan Valley Regional District - originating from our Central Island 911 partnership established when the City of Nanaimo operated dispatch services - TELUS is permitting the City of Nanaimo to sign the LGA agreement directly.

Once executed, the agreement will enable residents within the City of Nanaimo to access NG911 emergency services for police, fire, and ambulance once NG911 is fully implemented. Additionally, it ensures that ECOMM and Surrey Fire Dispatch, contracted by the City of Nanaimo, can connect to the NG911 network for continued dispatch services, provided they meet the agreement's requirements in their respective agreements with TELUS, and their customers have signed their respective NG911 LGAs.

Council's approval of the recommendations in this report will ensure the City of Nanaimo's access to NG911 services once the new system is operational, and provide direct technological improvements for those who live, work, or travel through the city of Nanaimo.

OPTIONS

1. Authorize the City of Nanaimo to enter into a revised Next Generation 911 Local Government Service Agreement with TELUS Communications Inc. (the agreement is attached as Appendix A) for a five-year term with automatic renewals for successive five-year terms; and

Authorize the execution of the NG911 Local Government Service Agreement with TELUS Communications Inc., including all subsidiary agreements required, for the provision of NG911 emergency calling services to the residents of the City of Nanaimo.

Advantages:

- Increased compatibility with emerging communication trends.
- Improved First Responder safety and awareness.
- Better location accuracy.
- Improved motor vehicle crash data.
- Support for text, video, and other multimedia applications in NG911 calls.
- Greater flexibility and resilience during disasters, offering improved network routing options to mitigate outages and reduce vulnerabilities.
- Allow NG911 emergency call centers to exchange additional data and information with responders, improving call processing times, enhancing situational awareness, and increasing responder safety.

Disadvantages: None

Financial Implications: None

2. That Council maintain status quo.

Advantages: None

Disadvantages:

- The City of Nanaimo will lose 911 services when NG911 is operational.
- City of Nanaimo partner PSAPs will not be permitted to join the NG911 network.

Financial Implications: Unknown |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The CRTC regulates telecommunications providers, including telephone and cell service companies that create the networks connecting 9-1-1 calls to emergency call centers.
- TELUS is the CRTC NG911 representative for British Columbia and Alberta.
- When a 911 call is received, these centers dispatch emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters, and paramedics.
- Telecommunications networks have greatly evolved over the years. Today, you can do much more than make a phone call; you can also send texts, videos, and photos. We want to ensure that emergency services benefit from these advancements.
- These expanded services are known as NG911 services. NG911 will provide Canadians with improved emergency services using world-class telecommunications networks. The transition to NG911 will occur gradually over the coming years.
- These updates won't affect current access to 911. If you need emergency help, you will still be able to dial 911 as you do today.

- Switching over to the new NG911 network is an important step in making new services available in the future, such as real-time text messaging services.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Next Generation 911 Local Government Service Agreement |

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