

Land Ambulance and Paramedic Response Unit Upfitting (Conversion) Services Sole Source Contracts

Presented To: Community and
Emergency Services
Committee

Meeting Date: April 17, 2023

Type: Managers' Reports

Prepared by: Melissa Roney
Community Safety

Recommended by: General Manager of
Community Safety

Report Summary

This report provides recommendations regarding entering into two (2) sole source contracts, both with a contract term of five (5) years, plus a five (5) year extension option (ten (10) year total) with Demers Ambulance Inc. and Rowland Emergency Vehicle Products Inc. for the purchase of land ambulances and paramedic response unit (PRU) fleet upfitting (conversion) services, respectively. In addition, these contracts ensure that standardization of our fleet is maintained.

Resolutions

Resolution 1:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorizes the General Manager of Community Safety to enter into a sole source contract with Demers Ambulance Inc. of Beloeil, Quebec for a contract term of five (5) years, plus a five (5) year extension option (ten (10) year total) for the purchase of land ambulances, as outlined in the report entitled "Land Ambulance and Paramedic Response Unit Upfitting (Conversion) Services Sole Source Contracts" from the General Manager of Community Safety, presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee on April 17, 2023.

Resolution 2:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorizes the General Manager of Community Safety to enter into a sole source contract with Rowlands Emergency Vehicle Products Inc. of Mississauga, Ontario for a contract term of five (5) years, plus a five (5) year extension option (ten (10) year total) for the purchase of PRU fleet upfitting (conversion) services, as outlined in the report entitled "Land Ambulance and Paramedic Response Unit Upfitting (Conversion) Services Sole Source Contracts" from the General Manager of Community Safety, presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee on April 17, 2023.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

The budget to purchase land ambulances and PRU fleet upfitting (conversion) services is approved by Council during the capital budget process and funded through the Capital Financing Reserve Fund – Paramedic Services. The contribution to the reserve fund is shared between the City and the Province. As a result, there are no financial implications.

Background

Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services completes over 33,000 vehicle responses, traveling over 1.1 million kilometers annually, with a fleet of twenty-three (23) ambulances and eleven (11) PRUs which are sport utility style vehicles staffed with a single paramedic.

Historically, Council has approved sole source contracts for both land ambulance purchases and PRU upfitting (conversion) services since 2004 (approximately every five (5) years). Given past and current market availability, the City is recommending that the contract terms for both contracts within this report be five (5) years and include a five (5) year extension option, for a total of ten (10) years to achieve efficiency in the approval and contracting processes. All contracts will have the City's standard termination for convenience clause in the event other providers enter the market for the City to consider.

Land Ambulances

Paramedic Services purchases three (3) new ambulances each year as part of our land ambulance fleet replacement program. The new land ambulances replace old land ambulances that have reached or exceeded their service life. The Ministry of Health (MOH) requires any ambulance operating in Ontario be certified under the Ontario Land Ambulance and Emergency Response Vehicle Standard. Demers Ambulance Inc. and Crestline Coach Inc. are the two sole Canadian ambulance manufacturers who provide ambulances that are certified and meet the MOH vehicle standard in the Province of Ontario. Demers Ambulance Inc. is the largest ambulance manufacturer in North America and is a leader in Canadian ambulance design. Demers has the majority of the Ontario market and although they operate independently, Demers Ambulance Inc. acquired Crestline Coach Inc. in 2018.

The anticipated cost of a land ambulance in 2023 is approximately \$220,000 (net), with all features and accessories required by Paramedic Services. The added accessories and features were selected, and in some cases, designed for our service to meet the needs of front-line staff and contribute to a safer mobile work environment for our paramedics.

Paramedic Services has been purchasing Demers land ambulances for over twenty years. Throughout the years the after-sale service provided by Demers has been very positive, with dependable technical support and a timely commitment to find resolutions to any vehicle problem, ensuring minimal ambulance downtime. The vendor/customer relationship with Demers is strong and can be described as collaborative. Throughout the past twenty years our Logistics Section has worked with Demers to improve, change, or modify ambulance features in an effort to adapt to updated medical equipment or to improve health and safety for staff. Examples include, working together to improve cabinet locks, technical equipment storage, and floor extensions.

PRU Upfitting (Conversion) Services

To maintain a reliable and efficient PRU fleet, Paramedic Services replaces older, high mileage PRUs following a capital replacement program which aligns with the operational needs of the Service. New vehicles replace those vehicles that have reached or exceeded their service life. PRUs generally are replaced based on a seven (7) year cycle depending on mileage, condition, maintenance costs and service needs. Paramedic Services purchases SUV vehicles under the normal City of Greater Sudbury public tendering process. After which, these vehicles must be sent to a Certified Emergency Response Vehicle upfitter for conversion that ensures that the vehicle meets the Ministry of Health (MOH) Provincial Land Ambulance and

Emergency Response Vehicle Standard. Vehicles must be upfitted by a certified experienced and reputable vendor as the conversions on the PRUs include complex vital additions. These include installing emergency lighting, and proper storage solutions for the medical bags and equipment. It is important all added systems function seamlessly and are interconnected with the OEM wiring and accessories.

There are only three (3) suppliers able to provide certified PRUs in Ontario. Rowlands Emergency Vehicle Products Inc. has been in business since 1957. Since the early 2000s, Rowlands has been solely specializing in paramedic vehicles and equipment which has made them a leader in the industry. Rowlands has kept up with industry demands, and through collaboration with customers, produces advanced and up to date emergency response vehicles, benefits realized by many paramedic services throughout the Province of Ontario. Rowlands Emergency Vehicle Products had previously been the exclusive Vendor of Record with the Ministry of Health to carry out all PRU conversion work on their behalf until this responsibility was transferred to the municipalities.

Paramedic Services' experience with Rowlands has been very positive. Rowlands has remained a leader in their field of PRU conversion by keeping up to date on legislative vehicle requirements and by being responsive to the evolving vehicle needs of paramedic services. They have built a state-of-the-art facility that can produce engineered and precise emergency vehicle upfitted solutions and accessories. Their trained and qualified staff ensures that the equipment is installed and tested to seamlessly function with OEM accessories and safety features, and that can withstand all types of situations ensuring paramedic safety.

Benefits of Fleet Standardization

Fleet standardization is vital to the Paramedic Service since the service employs over one hundred and fifty paramedics. Standardization allows for consistency in the storage location of all medical supplies and equipment required for the paramedics to perform timely lifesaving procedures. With the removal of the cognitive load of searching for equipment, paramedics can keep their focus on the patient. It also allows the Service to manage all areas of the fleet efficiently and effectively, including maintenance and training. Standardization assists our Logistics staff when processing and preparing these vehicles for deployment with all medical supplies and equipment consistently located in the same location no matter which vehicle staff are assigned to or which one they are processing.

The following are key advantages and benefits of fleet standardization:

- Cabinet layouts allows for medical supplies and medication to be stored in the same location in all vehicles providing instant access for patient care delivery.
- Medical equipment such as kit bags, patient extrication equipment, and spinal boards are in the same place in every vehicle.
- Similar vehicle design and features allows for improved vehicle orientation training for new and existing staff.
- The land ambulances all have the same dimensions on General Motors chassis which enables familiarity for staff despite assigned vehicle.
- Logistics staff can consistently process, stock and sanitize every vehicle following the same procedure resulting in improved infection prevention and control while reducing vehicle processing time.
- Over the years City fleet technicians have attended the Demers plant to obtain training on maintaining the complex systems and can better diagnose and repair the ambulances as they quickly become familiar, experienced, and trained to deal with the complexity of the ambulance components for one model.
- Fleet technicians become efficient in utilizing the specialized tools, schematics and manuals associated with the ambulance.
- The preventative maintenance program is consistent, reliable, predictable and allows for the City's Fleet Depot to maintain an inventory of commonly used specialized parts, eliminating the need to stock a larger inventory.
- Allows for faster and more efficient repairs which reduces vehicle down time.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the City's Paramedic Services maintains a standardized ambulance and PRU fleet upfitting for the next ten (10) years with Demers Ambulance Inc. and Rowland Emergency Vehicle Products Inc. respectively. In the event there is a special requirement or where provincial certification standards change or emerging technological advancements present themselves, an open-competitive procurement could be issued by the City.