



STAFF REPORT

Title: Commercial Security Program

Meeting Date: May 24, 2022

Executive Summary:

The City held two (2) open house sessions on March 14, 2022. The noon luncheon (11:30 to 1:30) focused on business community while the evening session (6:00 to 9:00p.m.) was open to the business community and the public. The two sessions were intended to inform the audience and to garner input on the outcomes on commercial security patrol initiative and path forward respecting the continued funding should there be support for the program.

The City of Cold Lake will need to make a decision on whether the pilot program will continue; and if so; how will it continue and how will it be funded. Alternatively, if the pilot program will be discontinued as we currently see it, will there be an alternate program that City of Cold Lake will consider (e.g. enhancing the hours of the Municipal Enforcement Program).

Council's Corporate Priorities Committee recommended that City Council continue with the program in partnership with the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce for the remainder of 2022.

Background:

Discussion took place at the May 17, 2022 Corporate Priorities Committee meeting wherein it was resolved to bring this item back to the May 24, 2022 regular meeting of Council with options for the costs to fund the program for the remainder of 2022.

It is understood that Watchdog currently provides security services for the Chamber of Commerce for 60 hours per week. These hours are divided between day and night shifts. The split of hours between the day shift and night shift is 20/40 (heavier on the night shift). Shifts are performed at random times.

It is routine for the day shift to last four hours between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Night shifts are scheduled at various times between 8:00 PM and 6:00 AM. Night shifts vary in length and are divided into periods of 4, 5 and 7 hours.

Based on input from the Chamber of Commerce, *"a proposed increase of 30 hours a week would permit a greater degree of flexibility in coverage during those times when*



coverage is lacking. In spite of the fact that these additional hours could be used to supplement the shifts anywhere required, the most immediate use would be to extend the night shift. It would allow for a 10-hour night shift, seven days a week, and all but eliminate the need for randomizing shift times. Watchdog can accommodate this increase in service.”

The current service provider has not signaled for an increase in hourly rates. With that,

1. The current level of service of 60 hours per week. There would be an annual budget impact of \$195,000. Council will need to budget an additional \$90,000 to fund the program to December 31, 2022.

During the 2023 Budget Deliberations, Council would need to consider the continue funding of \$195,000 (plus any increases to contractual expectations) as a grant to the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce.

2. It is understood that the Corporate Priorities Committee recommended that Council expand the program with additional funding. With the current level of service of 60 hours per week plus an additional 30 hours (Total of 90 hours per week). The annual budget impact would be in the order of magnitude of \$300,000. Council will need to budget an additional \$146,250 to fund the program to December 31, 2022 is this several level (based on 36 weeks).

During the 2022 Budget Deliberations, Council would need to consider the continue funding of \$292,500 (plus any increases to contractual expectations) as a grant to the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce.

3. Council can also direct administration to have the Commercial Security Program service contract operated under the City of Cold Lake. In future, there would be requirements for the service contract to be procured based on municipal policy framework.

Feedback received from the business community expressed strong support for the continuation of the commercial security patrol program. Noticeable part of these discussions were not concentrated on if the program should continue but:

- the impact of the homeless population on businesses in the downtown,
- homelessness is a social issue and common with all urban areas;
- commercial business should not be the only targeted group to pay for a social issues;
- a sense of increased homeless population in the downtown drawn to Cold Lake by the increased social services offered.



- That the security service be provided for all commercial businesses including business in the north.
- how the City should continue to provide and effectively manage homeless population i.e. through increasing RCMP patrols, community peace offers through increased service, or contracted third party;

Expanding on each of the foregoing bullets, participants shared incidence of some of their interaction with homeless people. Many of the speakers felt threatened by a homeless person.

Expressed by many of the participants was that homelessness is a social issue happening in all urban area and should be shouldered by all including the province. Also expressed by many participants was the sense that there are a number of new homeless faces in the downtown drawn to Cold Lake by the increased social services offered.

Business owners in the north expressed experiences with the homeless and want to hear that the commercial security program would be extended to businesses in the north.

Lastly participants discussed how the service would be provided.

In essence, the City of Cold Lake will need to make a decision on whether the pilot program will continue; if so how will it continue and how will it be funded. Alternatively, if the pilot program will be discontinued, will there be an alternative program (e.g. enhancing the hours of the Municipal Enforcement Program).

During Councils 2022 Budget Deliberations, it was expressed that the City of Cold Lake's would pay 50% of the program from the general municipal tax base and

OPTION	HOW WOULD IT BE PAID?	WHO PAYS FOR IT?
1	Businesses pay for it directly	Cold Lake businesses/property owners
2	Council funds it	All Cold Lake taxpayers
3	Establish a Business Improvement Area (BIA) in specific areas that would receive security	Property owners within the BIA would pay an additional tax (BIA board would manage security)
4	Council increase non-residential tax rate	Non-residential Cold Lake taxpayers



remaining should be raised by the business community. The following chart generally articulates the options to fund the program:

Further to the above, Council may want to consider funding the program to January 31, 2023 to allow for Council to consider the future impacts municipal taxes amongst other community priorities such as moving to 24/7 Community Peace Officer/Bylaw coverage which was also discuss during budget deliberations.

In order to funding the program to December 31, 2023 the City of Cold Lake will be need to allocate in the order of magnitude of \$75,000 (Current funding expires June 30, 2022).

Alternatives:

The Corporate Priorities Committee could consider the following:

- Recommend to Council that the Commercial Security Pilot Program funding expire and allow the initiative to end;
- Recommend to Council that the Commercial Security Pilot Program funding expire and direct administration review options to implement a 24/7 coverage for Municipal Enforcement.
- Recommend to Council that to allocate funding to continue the Commercial Security Pilot Program to December 31, 2022.
- Recommend to Council that the Commercial Security Program be folded into the City's programs and services and allocate funding as required.

Recommended Action:

That Council authorize administration to extend the Commercial Security Program to December 31, 2022 with a budget of \$90,000 funded by contingency and direction administration to commence procurement of the commercial security program under contract with the City of Cold Lake.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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