



STAFF REPORT

Title: Agreement - Appointment of Assessor

Meeting Date: September 27, 2022

Executive Summary:

The City of Cold Lake currently has a five (5) year agreement with Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. to provide assessment services to the City of Cold Lake for the 2018 to 2022 general and supplementary assessments. Troy Birtles, and Accurate Assessment Group Ltd., have provided assessments for the City of Cold Lake since the amalgamation in 1996. The assessment service costs approximately \$133,000 per year. The Agreement includes an option to extend the contract for an additional five (5) year term at the contract price established in the Agreement.

Administration seeks Council's direction on whether the City should enter into a five (5) year extension of the assessment contract with Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. and appoint Troy Birtles as the City's assessor for 2023-2027 assessment years.

Background:

Section 284.2 of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c M-26 establishes the requirement that municipalities appoint a municipal assessor:

Municipal assessor

284.2(1) A municipality must appoint a person having the qualifications set out in the regulations to the position of designated officer to carry out the functions, duties and powers of a municipal assessor under this Act.

(2) Subject to the regulations, a municipal assessor may delegate to any person any power or duty conferred or imposed on the municipal assessor by this Act.

(3) A municipal assessor is not liable for loss or damage caused by anything said or done or omitted to be done in good faith in the performance or intended performance of the municipal assessor's functions, duties or powers under this Act or any other enactment.

The City of Cold Lake entered into an Assessment Services Contract with Accurate Assessment Group Ltd, on December 15, 2017 for assessment services from 2018 through 2022 (term of the Agreement from April 1, 2018 to December 31, 2023). The agreement requires the Assessor to ensure that all assessments are conducted (filed, inputted, verified and adopted) in accordance with legislative requirements and the *Municipal Government Act* each year, and including participation at all Assessment Review Board complaints. The contract price is:

- 2018 \$19.00/parcel plus GST
- 2019 \$19.50/parcel plus GST



- 2020 \$20.00/parcel plus GST
- 2021 \$20.50/parcel plus GST
- 2022 \$21.00/parcel plus GST

The contract includes an option to renew by the City providing notice on or before March 1, 2023 for another five (5) year term (2023-2027) to expire December 31, 2028 at the following contract price:

- 2023 \$21.50/parcel plus GST
- 2024 \$22.00/parcel plus GST
- 2025 \$22.50/parcel plus GST
- 2026 \$23.00/parcel plus GST
- 2027 \$23.50/parcel plus GST

In 2021, there is 6,322 parcels assessed under the contract. There will be an estimated 6,300 parcels assessed under the contract in 2022.

The annual assessment costs in 2017 were approximately \$117,000, whereas the annual assessment cost in 2022 will be approximately \$133,000.

Assessment Services 2023-2028

Administration is recommending that Council consider reappointing Mr. Troy Birtles for the following reasons:

- Mr. Birtles has been the Assessor for the City of Cold Lake since the amalgamation in 1996. Mr. Birtles is very familiar with the parcels within the City and is aware of the areas which require specific attention and the areas that have caused problems.
- Mr. Birtles is aware of the City of Cold Lake's unique situations including the assessments of 4 Wing Cold Lake. Mr. Birtles has been an expert witness for the City during the 2012 DAP Hearing, the 2013-2021 DAP Hearing, and provided evidence for the Federal Court Hearing concerning the 4Wing Golf Course. It would be complicated and difficult to change assessors during the ongoing PILT appeal with PSPC.
- Transferring the City of Cold Lake assessment files to a different Assessor would incur additional costs and time for the significant knowledge transfer.
- Mr. Birtles has always been open to fielding numerous questions and working with property owners to ensure they understand their assessments. This has



included an annual open house as well as an open invitation to the public to contact Mr. Birtles and Accurate Assessment. This openness has mitigated the number of assessment appeals. Mr. Birtles is the City representative at all Assessment Review Board Hearings.

- There have been no concerns with Mr. Birtles performance of the City contract.

If Council would like to extend the Assessment contract for an additional five (5) year term, the City must provide notice to Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. on or before March 1, 2023. The extension would commence on April 1, 2023 to ensure there is no break in service.

Alternatives:

Council may consider the following options:

1. Council may pass a resolution to enter into a five (5) year contract with Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. and extend the appointment of Mr. Troy Birtles as the Assessor for the City of Cold Lake for the 2023 to 2027 assessment years.
2. Council may not appoint Mr. Troy Birtles as the Assessor for the City of Cold Lake and direct administration to obtain requests for proposals for Assessment Services.

Recommended Action:

That Council authorize the City of Cold Lake to enter into an additional five (5) year contract with Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. and Troy Birtles appointment as the Assessor for the City of Cold Lake for the 2023 to 2027 assessment years.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

Yes

Submitted by:

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer