



STAFF REPORT

Title: Emergency Rural Bus Line Support

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

Executive Summary:

The City of Cold Lake has received a letter, dated July 12, 2023, from Cold Shot bus line requesting financial assistance in approaching the Government of Alberta for emergency support for rural bus lines.

Included in the package received by the City of Cold Lake is a letter is addressed to the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors, Devin Dreeshen, after the company's initial letter, addressed to Premier Danielle Smith was forwarded to Minister Dreeshen for a response (which is also included).

Cold Shot's letters state that due to difficulties brought on by the COVID health restrictions and by the subsequent inflation seen in the Canadian economy, especially when it comes to the price of fuel.

The Minister's response stops short of offering immediate financial assistance, and references provincial attempts to have the federal government expand the eligibility of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund as well as a 2018 pilot project – The Rural Transportation Pilot Program – which is currently under review.

Background:

In 2018 Greyhound exited many rural routes in Alberta, prompting other smaller operations to attempt to fill the void.

Cold Shot provided connecting routes from Edmonton and Calgary to Cold Lake, Grande Prairie, Peace River, Camrose, Jasper, Fort McMurray and Lloydminster, with additional stops along the routes. According to media reports at the time the company expected to expand from 18 buses to about 28 to schedule the additional routes.

In a recent media interview, one of Cold Shot's owners, states that it is the only bus service in northern Alberta and that routes such as the Edmonton-Cold Lake connector route do not see the traffic needed to turn a profit.

[Alberta government urged to help sustain, restore rural bus service | CBC News](#)



Elected officials in Camrose have recently taken up the issue with the provincial government and will be seeking assistance in reviving a connector bus service to Edmonton at the upcoming Alberta Municipalities Fall Conference.

Alternatives:

- The Corporate Priorities Committee may pass a motion recommending that Council support Cold Shot's request for support in approaching the Government of Alberta for financial assistance with maintaining its rural bus lines.

Recommended Action:

The report has been generated as a Briefing Note to City Council. No specific action is necessary or recommended at this time.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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