



STAFF REPORT

Title: Cold Lake Marina Band Radio Policy Discussion

Meeting Date: March 18, 2025

Executive Summary:

In 2024, City Council expressed interest in installing and operating a Marine Road at the Cold Lake Marina. This expressed interest stem from members of the public and some marina users requesting that this level of service be provided for boaters on Cold Lake. Administration met with the person involved in the Radio Club worked with them to install the radio last season, 2024.

The radio has not been formally commissioned until policy framework on the expectation on the use of the radio has been established. Administration is developing a policy for staff to ensure that the public's expectations are in line with the level of service the City is able to provide.

Because there are training, certifications, and licensing requirements for the use of the radio at the marina, administration felt that a discussion surrounding the expected service to be provided was warranted so that training plans, marina shift schedules and an appropriate policy can be put in place.

It is important to note that the radio will not be monitored 24/7. Given the historical workload and staffing levels at the marina, and expectations that staff are not simply sitting in the office, the City can make no representations that the radio will be monitored consistently throughout the day.

Background:

Administration has worked with Gary Naylor from the Radio Club to install a radio at the Marina. Gary has received his certification to train municipal staff on use of marine radios operations and radio etiquette of which he prepared to conduct necessary and ongoing training with Marina Staff, Fire Fighters in the coming weeks and any staff rotations that will be responsible and may have to handle radio system.

While industry Canada has provided exemptions for vessels that are not operated in the territorial waters of another country from the requirements that a station licence be acquired, the City has been advised by its subject matter expert that a licence will likely need to be maintained for the City's station being a commercial service provider.



It should be noted that the standard training program is a three (3) day commitment followed by a competency certification exam for each employee. Cold Lake Fire-Rescue staff will be the first trained to gauge the course's expectations. It is estimated that, because Fire-Rescue staff are already trained on radio systems, they should be able to challenge the exam after one day of training. Administration will have to gauge competency requirements for any of the summer casual staff that are working at the marina to ensure coverage (subject to service levels and monitor expectations).

Marine radio certification teaches radio etiquette, everyday operating techniques, marine language, boater safety, emergency radio procedures and protocols. Training would be completed on a fee for service basis and will have some impact on the marina's operational budget pending staffing turnover.

A training course that typically lasts up to three days must be passed before someone is able to use the radio. A licencing fee of roughly \$50 must also be paid and the licence maintained in order for the radio to be used legally. It is unclear whether one station licence would need to be maintained for the radio or whether each individual user would need to maintain their own licence, although the initial indication is that individual licences would be the strict requirement, even though it may be commonplace for many operations with such a radio to not entirely conform to this.

Based on current services levels, it is important to note that the radio will not be monitored 24/7. Given the historical workload and staffing levels at the marina, the City can make no representations that the radio will be monitored consistently throughout the day. This will likely not be an issue until a major incident occurred where a boater was relying on the infrastructure.

There may be some benefit for the City to consider a third-party service provider provide monitoring services or standup its own Fire/Rescue dispatch centre that can include this scope of work.

In 2024 the Cold Lake Marina operated with seven summer casual staff at the peak of the season. The schedule was built to ideally have at least three staff on during the course of the day during the non-peak season, with two staff members present for the majority of the day.

Due to sick days and time off, this ideal was rarely achieved. Generally, depending on whether the Marina is in peak season operations or not, one or two staff members are scheduled for the opening shift from 7:00 am – 3:30 pm and another one or two scheduled to close from 11:30 am – 8:00 pm, with a third shift with one staff member scheduled for the middle of the day from 9:00 am – 5:30 pm.



Below is a sample schedule developed last year based on the marina service levels, staffing levels and each staff member's availability for the first week of June.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	2-Jun	3-Jun	4-Jun	5-Jun	6-Jun	7-Jun	8-Jun
Staff A	OFF	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	OFF
Staff B	7:00-3:30pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	OFF	OFF	7:00-3:30pm
Staff C	9:00-5:30pm	9:00-5:30pm	OFF	OFF	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm
Staff D	OFF	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	OFF
Staff E	1:30-10:00pm	OFF	OFF	7:00-3:30pm	7:00-3:30pm	9:00-5:30pm	1:30-10:00pm
Staff F	7:00-3:30pm	1:30-10:00pm	1:30-10:00pm	OFF	OFF	7:00-3:30pm	OFF
Staff G	1:30-10:00pm	OFF	OFF	9:00-5:30pm	9:00-5:30pm	9:00-5:30pm	1:30-10:00pm

The schedules allow for two to three staff members to be present during peak hours, however, there is no guarantee that a staff member will be in the marina office, where the radio is set up. Staffing levels do not allow for one staff member to be assigned to the marina office at all times, under the current schedule configuration. It is likely that additional staff will be needed to achieve such a level of service, if desired, since sick days, family commitments, and time off generally mean that the ideal staffing level is not always achieved at the facility.

It has been raised by members of the public and boaters of Cold Lake that the radio system could be used by boaters to communicate with the marina office to either learn about developing weather conditions or apprise marina staff of lake conditions, request updates on how busy the boat launch may be at any given time, or for other non-emergency, daily queries.

This likely represents the highest service level possible and would require that a staff member be assigned to the Marina office during its operational hours, or a mobile system be investigated that staff members can carry with them.

The lowest service level would likely see the radio turned off until emergency services required its use.

A "middle of the road" service level could see the radio turned on throughout the day with transmissions being passively monitored as staff find themselves within earshot of



the radio. This option would present some challenges with communication and managing the public's expectations regarding the ability to communicate with the marina office either for daily queries or in the event of an emergency.

A policy will be developed to set out clear expectations as to what the radio is for and how it will be used.

Mr. Naylor's estimate is that roughly 25-30 per cent of the boats that generally frequent Cold Lake have a compatible radio. There's some excitement that this new service level is being implemented for Cold Lake. We have not been able to find a comparable municipality in Alberta providing this level of service to generate policy framework. With that, the City insurer will likely be reviewing its established service level and risk management.

Alternatives:

- This item is presented for the committee's feedback and discussion.

Recommended Action:

Administration will prepare a Marine Band Radio Policy and develop marina staffing schedules and training plans based on the feedback received during the discussion.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer