**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**HAMILTON EMERGENCY SERVICES**  
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division

| TO: | Chair and Members  
Emergency & Community Services Committee |
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| COMMITTEE DATE: | February 17, 2010 |

| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Single Source of Paramedic Services Linen Cleaning and Replacement (HES10004) (City Wide) |

| SUBMITTED BY: | Jim Kay  
Hamilton Emergency Services |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| PREPARED BY: | Brent Browett 546-2424 ext. 7741  
Doug Waugh 546-2424 ext. 7742 |

| SIGNATURE: | |

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Mohawk Shared Services be approved as the single sourced provider for linen cleaning and replacement services for Emergency Medical Services Division of Hamilton Emergency Services, for a period of five years (2010 through to the end of 2014).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Pursuant to the City’s Purchasing Policy 11, Section 4.11, “Policy for Negotiations” this report seeks to establish Mohawk Shared Services as the single sourced vendor for the EMS linen cleaning program.

Mohawk Shared Services is a not-for-profit organization that operates as a cooperative and is owned by the hospitals. To have another linen service operation within the hospital to serve EMS would not be an ideal arrangement from the hospitals’ perspective.
The contract to provide Hamilton Emergency Services (HES) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) with laundry services for sheets, pillowcases, blankets and towels that are used for the comfort and safety of the patients carried in ambulances has expired.

HES EMS has been using Mohawk Shared Services for the supply and cleaning of linen since 2000 and it is the same vendor used by the area hospitals, long-term care facilities and many of the surrounding ambulance services. Mohawk Shared Services is a not for profit company located in Hamilton and has been in operation for over 40 years.

Based on the involvement of Mohawk Shared Services with all four (4) of the Hamilton hospitals; the 24 hours, 365 days emergency operational needs of HES EMS; and, the health and safety infection control standards required to adequately protect the public and the staff; the proven stability of the organization; the proven reliability and responsiveness of the service; and, demonstrated expertise in handling medical bio-hazards, staff have identified Mohawk Shared Services as the single vendor able to provide the required service for the foreseeable future.

It is recommended that staff be authorized to negotiate a single sourced contract with Mohawk Shared Services for the provision of laundering services required for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

**Financial:**

There are no financial implications. Funding for this operation is provided for in the Emergency Medical Services operating budget.

Mohawk Shared Services being a not-for-profit Company has taken the necessary steps to offer efficiencies and cost savings to those members within the local health care facilities including several Emergency Medical Services within the Golden Horseshoe. Hamilton EMS would benefit by leveraging of these existing contracts.

**Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications.

**Legal:**

There are no legal implications.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Hamilton’s EMS Paramedics use non disposable linens for the safety and protection of the patients that they treat. This normally includes sheets, pillow cases, blankets and towels which need to be laundered after each patient use. This process requires a system where a supply of clean linen is continuously and readily available 24 hours, 365 days a year; for immediate, replacement, storage and isolation of soiled linens on site; and transportation of soiled linens to a cleaning facility where the linens are appropriately cleaned.

The vast majority of EMS patients are transported to one of the four (4) Hamilton area general hospitals, and on occasion are returned to long-term care facilities. It is at these hospitals or facilities that the patient is removed from the EMS stretcher and the soiled linen needs to be immediately placed in cleaning bins, and new linen acquired by the paramedic crews before leaving the site. This is the primary factor that has lead staff to recommend Mohawk Shared Services to be the single sourced for this service. Mohawk Shared Services have full and unlimited access areas of the hospitals and other facilities to collect and provide the linen supplies at the sites HES EMS needs this to occur to contain potential contamination. Otherwise the contaminated linen would need to routinely go back into the ambulance while attending to the next patient, until such time as the paramedics could get to a HES EMS facility to drop off the dirty linen and acquire clean linen. Furthermore, whereas it is the same vendor the hospitals from time to time if HES EMS is deleted of linens supplies in unforeseen circumstances we have been permitted to draw upon the hospital linen.

As noted all the area hospitals use the services of Mohawk Shared Services to clean their linens including St. Joseph’s Villa and St. Peter’s Hospital. Mohawk Shared Services in effect is a cooperative owned by local hospitals and long-term care facilities within the Golden Horseshoe. Through the cooperative, Mohawk Laundry Services have soiled linen collection bins strategically located in every area of the four (4) hospitals and the two (2) long-term care facilities within Hamilton. In addition, Mohawk Laundry Services delivers clean linen to these hospitals through a sophisticated computerized ordering system.

Hamilton EMS and other EMS services in surrounding areas have been allowed to join to leverage on this unique process whereby Mohawk Shared Services has acquired and supplies a stock of linen for EMS that is marked differently from hospital linen so as to be easily identifiable. The soiled EMS linen is collected by Mohawk Shared Services from these sites while they are in the hospital on a pick up and then take it to their cleaning facility. The applicable charge is apportioned to HES EMS. This collaboration with other EMS services, hospitals and long-term care facilities creates unique economies of scale that could not be replicated in the current circumstance.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The City of Hamilton Purchasing Policy, Section 4.11, Policy for Negotiations allows for the use of negotiations when a single source for the supply of a particular Good and/or Service is being recommended because it is more cost effective or beneficial for the City.

Single source requests which are $250,000 or greater must have Council approval prior to initiating the negotiation process.

The recommendation contained within Report HES10004 pertaining to the Single Source of Paramedic Services Linen Cleaning and Replacement is in keeping with the intent of this provision.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Corporate Services Department, Financial Services Division, Purchasing Section

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

By continuing to utilize the services of Mohawk Shared Services, HES EMS is able to operate in a manner that would be considered a best practice in infection control as it relates to containing the spread of bio hazards in the community and from patient to patient.

By using the services of Mohawk Shared Services to clean EMS linen, the EMS Division is able to utilize the existing soiled laundry collection bins in hospitals, and have carts of clean linen automatically delivered to the hospitals through Mohawk Shared Services inventory control system, and placed in areas so that it is available to the paramedics when and where it is required. This state of the art inventory control and ordering system ensures linen is available as needed any time of the day or night.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

The alternative solution is to prepare tender specifications to find a different vendor to supply and launder the EMS linens through the competitive bid process.
Whereas no other linen vendor is currently being used by any of the area hospitals, a new vendor would have to set up alternative drop off sites other than the hospital for contaminated linen and alternative pick up sites for fresh linen. In order to facilitate the drop off and pick up of linen, added transit time for the paramedics would occur and on occasion it would take an ambulance out of service if they had many contaminated linens or not enough stock.

In addition, under the current program the hospital and the long-term care facilities that also use Mohawk Laundry assist EMS in recovering EMS linens by dropping it in the carts that are in their facilities. The user friendliness of returning found linen would no longer exist.

EMS is not aware of any vendors that have linkages with the surrounding ambulance services, long-term care facilities and the hospitals which would be necessary to yield the benefits that EMS currently enjoys from participating in this co-operative.

It is apparent that this alternative would result in
- increased cost due to lost or stolen linen with the system,
- increased cost due to additional travel for ambulances including fuel, missed meal break allowances, and extended shift overtime
- creating health and safety risks to the paramedics and patients
- increased response times

This approach is not recommended due to the potential negative effects as noted that this could have on patients in ambulances, the paramedics, and the citizen as a taxpayer.

Financial:

Based on the alternative outlined and the required changes to the current system there would be direct costs in additional kilometres put on ambulances to get to the locations where the linen would be dropped off and picked up. It is reasonable to predict there would be an increase in missed meal breaks attributed to this new activity that would have to be paid out as well as more mandatory extended shifts to drop off and pick up the linen in alternative locations than might otherwise be the intended next stop for the paramedic crew. It is also reasonable to predict that EMS would not have the same recovery rate of lost and/or stolen linen and the replacement costs of the linen would increase.

Staffing:

Due to additional transit time, additional staffing may be required to maintain the same level of street service performance.
Legal:

The paramedics would be routinely required to transport contaminated linen including bio-hazardous substances within the Ambulances. The potential health risk to the patients and the paramedics would be increased compared to the current practice.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)


Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization
- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- An enabling work environment - respectful culture, well-being and safety, effective communication

Financial Sustainability
- Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

Intergovernmental Relationships
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy
- An improved customer service

Social Development
- Residents in need have access to adequate support services

Environmental Stewardship
- Reduced impact of City activities on the environment
- Aspiring to the highest environmental standards

Healthy Community
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
Values: Honest, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork