SUBJECT: Request for Proposal – Operational Review of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) (HES06005) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the General Manager of Emergency Services be authorized to hire a consultant to complete a third party analysis of the operations of Hamilton's Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

(b) That an amount not to exceed $150,000, funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve, to hire the consultant to undertake the third party analysis be approved.

Jim Kay
General Manager / Chief
Hamilton Emergency Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Hamilton EMS, as well as other ambulance services in Ontario over the past three (3) years, have been experiencing emerging pressures that are consuming ambulance resources services. To ensure that HES is providing the appropriate level of service for out-of-hospital medical emergencies, over the next four (4) years, a sophisticated analysis is required. HES does not have either the in-house expertise or staff capacity to conduct such a review.
BACKGROUND:

Hamilton’s ambulance service was downloaded on August 1, 2000. Since that time there have been many changes out of the control of the municipality that are impacting on the service delivery. The key issues affecting EMS are:

- a shift to more medical emergency calls and less inter-facility transfers;
- providing meal breaks at prescribed times as entrenched in provincial legislation with no sensitivity to emergency call demands; and
- an increased frequency and duration of hospital off-loading.

In an effort to address these issues the City has;

- matched peak demands with the ambulance schedules;
- added approximately 60,000 front-line staffing hours to the previous 230,000 hours;
- introduced AVL/GPS tracking systems;
- piloting electronic mapping in select ambulances to improve response reliability; and
- adjusted the advanced care paramedic ambulance coverage to improve the efficiency of the resources across the City.

In 2001, Hamilton engaged a consultant to conduct a benchmarking review of the organizational structure of EMS. Given that the review is now 5 years old, it was planned to update the HES Business Plan. This is the appropriate time to complete the EMS section of that process. This review will build on the work of other municipalities to collectively maintain a seamless emergency response system with our neighbouring municipalities and it will be a critical component for the proposed HES 4-Year Business Plan to ensure that HES remains effective and efficient in its provision of emergency response.

The review will also include an analysis of the events of May 17, 2006, where for approximately 20 minutes all the Hamilton ambulances were assigned to calls. It is important to notice on that date, paramedic supervisor response units and the fire department tiered response system continued to be available for emergency first response. Area municipalities also provided transport ambulance coverage as part of the Ontario seamless ambulance service system. This part of the review will inform the larger project which will also include a full review of resources including organizational structure.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The RFP will be awarded to qualified candidates that have the previously demonstrated experience and ability to:

- conduct scientific analysis to predict the appropriate level of emergency medical resources at any given time of the day or week;
- accurately assess the variables that are affecting EMS resource demands;
• provide expert advice on locally appropriate methods to divert persons to more appropriate services through public education and other methods;
• design a locally appropriate emergency response design strategy and supporting management structures and systems that maximize effectiveness and efficiency;
• recommend target emergency response times for HES based on medical evidence.

The report will provide an unbiased account of the current ready state of HES to respond to out-of-hospital emergencies, recommendations for any immediate improvements where deemed appropriate. The report will form part of the next 4-Year Business Plan for Emergency Services.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The City could request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to conduct a service review. This is not recommended as the MOHLTC as the service review would not provide the level of analysis required and the MOHLTC advice could be viewed as biased given some of issues may be directly related to provincial policy.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The anticipated cost of the RPF is $150,000. Since these funds were not contained in the 2006 Budget approved by Council, it is suggested the cost be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

Purchasing Policies

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

Corporate Services Department, Finance Division

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.
Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?
 ☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Anticipated that an unbiased third party review based on scientific evidence and resulting action plan will assist in mitigating the concerns expressed by OPSEU Local 256 paramedics at City Council May, 2006.

Will continue to demonstrate Hamilton’s desire to be an industry leader and, in turn, continue to attract highly skilled employees.

This analysis will address some of the concerns raised in the recent Employee Satisfaction Survey and bring some clarity to these issues.