



Corporate Report

DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION	City Manager's Office Emergency Medical Services	REPORT NO.	2002.120
DATE PREPARED	April 17, 2002	FILE NO.	
MEETING DATE	April 22, 2002		
SUBJECT	Assumption of Manitouwadge EMS		

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide a recommendation related to the direct delivery of Emergency Medical Service in the community of Manitouwadge by the City of Thunder Bay

BACKGROUND

Since the late 1950's, Manitouwadge General Hospital has been the service provider for Emergency Medical Service in Manitouwadge and the surrounding area. The City of Thunder Bay became the Designated Delivery Agent for the District of Thunder Bay on January 1st, 2000. In December of 1999, the City entered into a two year performance contract with Manitouwadge General Hospital to provide EMS to the community of Manitouwadge and surrounding area. Subsequent to the departure of the Manager from the service, the hospital encountered difficulties in finding a permanent replacement. During this time, the relationship between the paramedics and their employer became very strained. The hospital appointed a part time acting manager but has remained unsuccessful in recruiting a full time manager.

The relationship between the three full time paramedics and the hospital deteriorated considerably since the spring of 2001. On February 26th, the Manitouwadge General Hospital passed a resolution advising Superior North EMS they would no longer operate the ambulance service after August 31st 2002 and issued lay off notices to all staff. In March, two of the full time paramedics resigned to find work in the south. The third has recently indicated he will be resigning on April 26th.

COMMENTS

Superior North EMS has been working with the hospital and acting manager to assist in recruitment and promotion of the positions available in this community. Unfortunately, the recent history of strained relationships has made it very difficult to find anyone willing to work in this environment or assume responsibility for operating this service.

Other nearby hospitals qualified as service providers have been asked to take over the operation of this service but have declined. They have indicated they do not want to assume responsibility for a short term and then have to divest themselves of the service in December should a decision be made not to continue with the present contracted service delivery model.

On April 12th, a meeting was held with the Chief of Staff, the Paramedic Medical Director the C.E.O and other Manitowadge Hospital management to discuss possible solutions. They described the working relationship with the paramedics as less than ideal. They felt a clean slate is urgently needed to rebuild the service.

On April 13th, a meeting was held with the acting manager and he remains committed to making the service work, despite the enormous strain he is currently under. Over the past week discussions have been held with five paramedics in the north who have demonstrated some interest in working on a full time permanent basis in Manitowadge. They made it clear that job security after August 31st was a barrier to applying for these jobs and that they would not apply to work under a four month contract.

Attempts to hire temporary staff for a one to two week contract is also underway. A province wide appeal has been sent out. There has been no success thus far.

The hospital has indicated they can no longer staff the service and that they have been unable to hire anyone due to the uncertainty of the situation and the termination of their contract on August 31st.

CONCLUSION

The situation is now extremely critical. Unless staff can be hired very soon, there will not be an operational ambulance service by next week. It would appear the hospital is unable to attract anyone due to the uncertainty created by the contract ending August 31st. No other suitable service providers want to take on this challenge. As Designated Delivery Agent under the Ambulance Act, the City of Thunder Bay is responsible for the delivery of EMS in the District of Thunder Bay. All costs associated with delivering this service directly will be covered using funds previously provided to the hospital.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2002.120 (Emergency Medical Services) we recommend the City of Thunder Bay assume responsibility for the direct provision of EMS in Manitouwadge as of 16:01 hours April 26th, 2002;

AND THAT steps be immediately taken to recruit paramedics to handle the immediate and long term needs of the community.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

None.

PREPARED BY: Jocelyn Bourgoïn, Director

This report signed and verified by Robert Petrie, Acting City Manager, City of Thunder Bay on April 19, 2002