



Administrative Report

Office of the Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Justin Lammers
Chief, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services

Date: Wednesday, November 01, 2023

Subject: Essex-Windsor EMS 2024 Pre-Budget Vehicle Procurement Approval

Report #: 2023-1101-EMS-R09-JL

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Essex County Council with information and seek approval to order eight (8) ambulances, three (3) Early Response Vehicles (ERV), and one (1) District Chief vehicle. The delivery of vehicles is anticipated to be between the fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025.

Background

The EMS department has a current fleet of forty (40) ambulances, nine (9) emergency response vehicles (ERV), three (3) District Chief pickup trucks, one (1) logistics vehicle, four (4) administration vehicles, one (1) special operations trailer, one (1) hazmat trailer, and one (1) off-road transport vehicle. This report will concentrate on the ambulance fleet, ERVs, and the District Chief pickup trucks only.

In 2018, our supplier of ambulances Crestline, joined the Demers Braun family and became part of the first Canadian ambulance manufacturer group called Demers Braun Crestline Medix (DBCM). To maintain standardization among the fleet, Essex Windsor EMS utilizes Crestline ambulances.

According to the current Vehicle Asset Management Plan, seven (7) ambulances, three (3) ERVs, and three (3) pickup trucks are due for replacement in 2024.

The replacement of the vehicles requires down payment security for both the procurement of the chassis' and any conversion material. Any delay in securing chassis and/or material may result in vehicles not being in service for the 2024 fiscal year thereby increasing vehicle repairs and maintenance until such time the vehicles can be replaced. EWEMS is recommending pre-budget approval to secure the required vehicles.

In developing the 2024 Budget, EWEMS will be recommending the addition of twenty-four (24) full-time equivalent ("FTE") staff, which will require two (2) additional ambulances. For clarity, 24 FTE equates to 16 full-time positions, with budgetary support to backfill those positions for vacation and unscheduled absences. One (1) ambulance will be requested as a new purchase, while the second ambulance will be an existing vehicle that would historically have been sold upon replacement. The rationale for this split is to soften the budgetary impact within 2024 and to purchase the second additional ambulance within the 2025 budget.

EWEMS Fleet and Logistics Supervisor, the Deputy Chief of Operations, and the Chief have considered the current fleet condition, longevity, repairs, and maintenance experience in presenting the following recommendation. EWEMS has also explored the option of remounting current ambulance components on a new chassis ("remount") with the intent to lower the financial impact on fleet reserves.

Therefore, EWEMS is recommending the following vehicle types and numbers be replaced in the 2024 fiscal year.

- Five (5) new ambulances
- Three (3) remounted ambulances
- Three (3) new ERVs
- One (1) District Chief Pickup

It should be noted that EWEMS will also be coming to Council in early 2024 for 2025 pre-budget approval to secure vehicles for the 2025 year, allowing EWEMS to get back into a regular replacement cycle.

Discussion

Ambulances

Essex Windsor EMS has been advised by Crestline Coach Ltd that to ensure delivery of the required chassis from the manufacturer (GM Canada) and to further ensure delivery of the ambulances to EWEMS by early 2025, order

confirmation is required as soon as possible. Crestline Coach is currently forecasting a 12-18-month timeline from payment of deposit to receipt of the vehicle. The chassis configuration for the 2024 model will be identical to those purchased in 2023, that being the 3500 model with a Vortec ® gasoline engine. The conversion configuration for 2024 remains identical to the 2023 configuration.

Crestline Coach Ltd has provided a quote of \$251,367 (plus HST) per ambulance, for four (4) of the five (5) replacement units. This quote includes the cost of:

- Chassis
- Conversion options
- 5-year extended warranty
- Shipping

Crestline Coach Ltd has provided a quote of \$259,100 (plus HST) for the one (1) additional unit (5/5). This quote includes the cost of:

- Chassis
- Conversion options
- Technologies that can't be brought over from an existing unit, due to this being an enhancement. Ex. Wi-Fi, AVL.
- 5-year extended warranty
- Shipping

For comparison, the 2023 ambulance purchase price was \$239,460 (plus HST) for the chassis, conversion, and delivery. The 2024 quotation is ~4.85% higher than the 2023 purchase price and is attributed to the GM chassis increase, component supply chain increases, and inflation. The total cost for the above five (5) ambulances equates to \$1,264,568 (plus HST).

Remounting of ambulance components is a practice that is gaining in popularity across Ontario and Canada. This practice extends the life of the major conversion components of an ambulance and results in a lower financial impact on the replacement of the vehicle. While remounts allow for cost savings, the chassis is still affected by the supply chain and the work of remounting is currently in high demand. We can anticipate a 12-18-month turnaround on this option as well.

A remount consists of taking the used ambulance box and contents and mounting this box onto a new chassis. The box is then updated, refreshed, repaired (if needed), and some new internal components replaced. Essentially, a new ambulance is built using a used ambulance box that EWEMS would normally decommission. EWEMS has provided Crestline Coach with three (3) ambulances for consideration to be remounted and Crestline has provided a quote that includes the cost of:

- 2024 Chassis
- Remount options
- Repair and repaint the ambulance box
- Replace items inside the patient compartment that are subject to high wear
- Complete graphic refresh
- Shipping

The cost per remounted vehicle is \$162,303 (plus HST), bringing the total cost of three (3) remounted vehicles to \$486,909 (plus HST).

Essex Windsor EMS is optimistic that by implementing remounts into the fleet there will be financial savings, but we are also cautious as Essex Windsor EMS has never purchased remounts before and we are taking a measured approach to this change. The cost of ownership, as well as in-service time, has never been experienced locally, but through provincial networking, it appears to be a relatively stable option.

The total amount of the 2024 eight (8) ambulance purchase is \$1,751,477 (plus HST). For comparison, if EWEMS did not entertain the option of remounts, the total amount for eight (8) 2024 ambulances would be \$2,018,669 (plus HST). Remounting represents a savings of \$267,192.

EWEMS recommends and is supported by the CAO and Treasurer, that Crestline Coach Ltd. be the Sole Source provider of Ambulances for the 2024 procurement period.

Early Response Vehicles (ERVs)

ERVs are vehicles utilized by single-staffed paramedics to provide rapid response to a variety of requests, from 911 emergencies to community paramedic responses. These vehicles are traditionally 4X4 special utility vehicles (SUVs) that are able to travel in a variety of conditions and road

types. EWEMS has had an excellent experience in the GM Tahoe-type vehicle, specifically the "Police Package". This type of vehicle is built to meet the various types of travel and conditions an emergency response vehicle endures. In addition, EWEMS fleet maintenance has experience with this vehicle and has a variety of parts to repair and maintain this model of vehicle. The order lead time on these vehicles is similar to ambulances at 12-18 months.

ERVs are built to the current *Ontario Provincial Land Ambulance and Emergency Response Vehicle Standards* and require conversion by a certified vendor. The process is rather complex, but simplistically, not just anyone can convert an SUV for EMS purposes. And of those who can convert an SUV, each conversion design they offer is certified and can't be altered without another certification, which is costly.

Currently, EWEMS is unable to definitively obtain a quote for 2024 orders. Our vendors have informed us that the pricing for the chassis has not been published therefore it is unknown what the budget impact is for the 2024 budget year.

While 2024 pricing is not yet available, through discussions with vendors it appears pricing will be in the range of \$120,000 to purchase the SUV and convert it to ministry standards. For comparison, our 2023 SUV purchase and conversion was \$110,060. It is important to note that based on the availability of SUVs in the market, Essex Windsor EMS may have to pivot to a different vehicle make/model to complete the order. In discussions with vendors, there are reasonable alternatives within the same price range.

It is recommended that Essex Windsor EMS receive pre-budget approval to secure three (3) ERVs for the 2024 budget year, in line with the asset replacement cycle, at a cost of \$360,000 (plus HST).

Pickup Trucks

EWEMS has three (3) GM Sierra 2500 pickup trucks converted for District Chief tasks. These vehicles act as supply depots, command posts, and rapid response units on a daily basis. EWEMS utilizes the 2500 model to meet the needs and travel conditions that the District Chief faces each day, including in inclement weather.

The Asset Management Plan indicates that three (3) pickups are to be replaced in 2024. The Deputy of Operations, Supervisor of Equipment Maintenance, and the Chief have reviewed the vehicles and have determined

that one (1) pickup truck would suffice for the 2024 year and two (2) vehicles will be required in 2025. This will lessen the impact on the vehicle reserves and give EWEMS the opportunity to find design efficiencies in one (1) year, that can be improved upon and transferred to the following years.

Similar to the SUVs, while pricing is not yet available, through discussions with vendors it appears we will be in the range of \$153,000 (plus HST) to purchase a 2500 pickup truck and convert it to ministry standards. It is recommended that EWEMS order the pickup truck as soon as possible to secure delivery in early 2024.

Financial Implications

The 2024 Draft Budget will include the purchase of eight (8) ambulances at a budgeted amount of \$1,751,477 (plus HST), three (3) ERVs at a budgeted amount of \$360,000 (plus HST), one (1) pickup truck at a budgeted amount of \$153,000 (plus HST). The Equipment Reserve will contribute \$1,546,000 with the balance of \$205,477 (plus non-recoverable HST) supported from the levy. This funding model is consistent with the funding model for fleet in the 2023 Budget.

As part of the Corporation's 2024 Asset Management Plan update, the sufficiency of reserves will be reviewed. Reserves are funded using historical cost values and as asset replacement costs escalate it will be necessary to adjust the reserve funding model to ensure adequate funds are in reserve to fund future replacement of existing assets.

Consultations

Kelli Schmidt, Financial Analyst,
Melissa Ryan, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer,
Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer.

Recommendation

That Essex County Council provide Essex Windsor EMS with 2024 pre-budget approval to proceed with:

1. The 2024 ordering of eight (8) Crestline Coach Ltd. Type III ambulances with a total purchase price of \$1,751,477 (plus HST).

2. The 2024 ordering of three (3) Emergency Response Vehicles with conversion for an estimated purchase price of \$360,000 (plus HST).
3. The 2024 ordering of one (1) pickup truck with conversion, for an estimated purchase price of \$153,000 (plus HST).

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin Lammers

Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
N/A	N/A