



## **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, March 06, 2024

**Subject:** Essex-Windsor EMS 2025 Pre-Budget Vehicle Procurement Approval

**Report #:** 2024-0306-EMS-R03-JL

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Essex County Council with information and to seek approval for a 2025 pre-budget order of eight (8) ambulances, two (2) Early Response Vehicles (ERV), and two (2) District Chief vehicles. The delivery of vehicles is anticipated to be in the fourth quarter of 2025.

#### **Background**

The EMS department has a current fleet of forty-one (41) 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, two (2) ERVs and two (2) District Chief pickup trucks are due for replacement in 2025. It is also being recommended that one (1)

additional ambulance be added to the 2025 budget to support the increase in Paramedic staffing from the 2024 budget approval.

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 2025 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.

Within the 2024 budget, EWEMS was approved to enhance Paramedic staffing by twenty-four (24) full-time equivalent ("FTE"). This enhancement required two (2) additional ambulances, one of which was approved within council report 2024-1101-EMS-R09-JL and the other by extending the life of one (1) current ambulance to decrease the budgetary impact for the 2024 year. The intent was to purchase the second ambulance within the 2025 budget, as outlined within this document.

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") to lower the financial impact on fleet reserves.

Therefore, EWEMS is recommending the following vehicle types and numbers be replaced in the 2025 fiscal year:

- Five (5) new ambulances
- Three (3) remounted ambulances
- Two (2) new ERVs
- Two (2) new District Chief pickup trucks

It should be noted that EWEMS will also be coming to Council in early 2025 for 2026 pre-budget approval to secure vehicles for the 2026 year, allowing EWEMS to continue a regular replacement cycle.

## **Discussion**

### **Ambulances**

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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 mid-year 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 2025 model will be identical to those purchased in 2025, the 3500 model with a Vortec ® gasoline engine. The conversion configuration for 2025 remains identical to the 2025 configuration.

Crestline Coach Ltd has provided a quote of \$269,547 (plus HST) per ambulance, for five (5) of the eight (8) replacement units. This quote includes the cost of:

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

For comparison, the 2024 ambulance purchase price was \$251,367 (plus HST) for the chassis, conversion, and delivery. The 2025 quotation is 7% higher than the 2024 purchase price and is attributed to the GM chassis increase, component supply chain increases, new WiFi and vehicle locating technology, and inflation. The total cost for the above five (5) ambulances equates to \$1,347,735 (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:

- 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 \$176,820 (plus HST), bringing the total cost of three (3) remounted vehicles to \$530,460 (plus HST).

Essex Windsor EMS purchased three (3) remounted ambulances within the 2024-1101-EMS-R09-JL Pre Budget Approval report, but have not had the opportunity to operationalize these vehicles, as we won't see them until first quarter of 2025. We are remaining with three (3) remounts and five (5) new builds, until we have sufficient time to evaluate the remounts with the potential to remount all ambulances and realize further savings.

The total amount of the 2025 eight (8) ambulance purchase is \$1,878,195 (plus HST). For comparison, if EWEMS did not entertain the option of remounts, the total amount for eight (8) 2025 ambulances would be \$2,156,376 (plus HST). Remounting represents a savings of \$278,181.

EWEMS recommends and is supported by the CAO and Treasurer, that Crestline Coach Ltd. be the Sole Source provider of Ambulances for the 2025 procurement period.

### **Early Response Vehicles (ERVs)**

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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 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.

Through discussions with our vendor, we have been provided with a budgetary quote of \$124,821 (plus HST) to purchase an SUV and convert it to ministry standards. For comparison, our 2024 SUV purchase and conversion was \$117,312 (plus HST). This represents a 6.4% increase in the purchase price.

It is recommended that Essex Windsor EMS receive pre-budget approval to secure two (2) ERVs for the 2025 budget year, in line with the asset replacement cycle, at a cost of \$249,642 (plus HST).

### **Pickup Trucks**

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EWEMS has three (3) GM Sierra 2500 pickup trucks converted for District Chief tasks. One (1) of these pickup trucks is currently in the process of being replaced, as approved in the 2024-1101-EMS-R09-JL pre-budget approval report. These vehicles act as supply depots, command posts, and rapid response units daily. EWEMS utilizes the 2500 model to meet the needs and travel conditions that the District Chief faces each day, including inclement weather.

The Asset Management Plan indicates that three (3) pickups are to be replaced in 2024. Through review by the Deputy Chief of Operations, Deputy Chief of Planning and Physical Resources, and the Chief, only one (1) pickup truck was ordered for the 2024 year and two (2) pickup trucks will be required in 2025. By spreading out the number of vehicles to be replaced over two (2) years, we lowered the impact on the vehicle reserves. This also allows EWEMS the opportunity to find design efficiencies from the 2024 purchase, that can be improved upon and transferred to the following years.

Through discussions with our vendor, we have been provided with a budgetary quote of \$159,000 (plus HST) to purchase a pickup truck and convert it to ministry standards. For comparison, our 2024 pickup truck purchase and conversion was \$152,478 (plus HST). This represents a 4.3% increase in the purchase price.

It is recommended that Essex Windsor EMS receive pre-budget approval to secure two (2) pickups for the 2025 budget year, in line with the asset replacement cycle, at a cost of \$318,000 (plus HST).

## Financial Implications

Based on the discussions above the 2025 Draft Budget will include the proposed purchase of the following vehicles:

Name of Asset	Quoted Cost per unit (not including HST)	# of Units	Total Cost
New Ambulance-Vortec 3500	\$ 269,547	5	\$ 1,347,735
Remounted Ambulance	\$ 176,820	3	\$ 530,460
Early Response Vehicles (ERVs)	\$ 124,821	2	\$ 249,642
District Chief Pick Ups	\$ 159,000	2	\$ 318,000
Total Cost of 2025 Pre Budget-Vehicle Request			\$ 2,445,837

The EMS Vehicle Reserve will cover the full \$2,445,837 requested in this report, with no reliance on levy funds. This funding approach for EMS vehicles aligns with the model used in previous years' EMS Budgets.

As part of the Corporation's 2025 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 2025 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 \$1,878,195 (plus HST).
2. The 2024 ordering of two (2) Emergency Response Vehicles with conversion for an estimated purchase price of \$249,642 (plus HST).

3. The 2024 ordering of two (2) pickup trucks with conversion, for an estimated purchase price of \$318,000 (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