

August 27, 2015

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Travis Rob, CBO, Facilities/Special Projects Coordinator

**RE: Town of Fort Frances Phone System Issues and Replacement**

**Background**

The Town of Fort Frances operates a complex and extensive phone system with the main hub and switching apparatus located in the Civic Centre main phone and data room. On July 31, 2015 the Town of Fort Frances experienced an outage with our phone system that knocked out the connection with Public Works and the Fort Frances Power Corporation Garage as well as the Voicemail system. On August 4, 2015 Bell Canada was called to send a tech to look into the issue.

Through the weeks following while Bell was working on a solution to the issues it was determined that the phone system was installed initially in 1996. It appears that there was a small upgrade in 2002, 2007 and 2009 to correspond with a phone system upgrade at Public Works, however the main components remain 1996 vintage. On Friday August 21, 2015 Bell was successful in completing a repair and all lines and facilities were back online. On Monday August 24, 2015 the phone system again failed with Bell completing a repair on August 25, 2015.

On Friday August 7, 2015 I began talking to a local contractor trying to put together a budgetary number for the replacement of the entire phone system to a newer voice over IP system as it was apparent that the current system was at or very close to end of life.

On August 27, 2015 I reached out as well to Telcom Enterprises, the same consultant that completed the telecommunications audit for us back in 2014, for a budgetary number to complete an upgrade.

The phone system of any organization is vital to its operation and needs to be reliable. The current system that is almost 20 years old has truly shown its vulnerability in the past weeks and a replacement solution is required. After discussions with Bell, Triple A Contracting and Telcom Enterprises, my recommendation is to hire a consultant to complete an inventory and prepare an RFP for a system and installer. Given that these systems are specialized in nature this added expertise should make for a seamless transition. The budgetary cost for replacement of the systems as well as a consultant to complete the specifications and RFP would be \$250,000.00. This value includes applicable taxes and a contingency to allow for any required upgrading to the existing facility wiring and unknowns that are always common when dealing with technology upgrades.

Administration is recommending the unbudgeted replacement of the phone system as soon as possible to ensure no further disruptions to the services provided by the Town due to system outages.

Respectfully Submitted

Original Signed By Travis Rob

Travis Rob, EIT  
Chief Building Official, Facilities/Special Projects Coordinator

Council Approval of this report will approve an unbudgeted expense of \$250,000.00 for the immediate replacement of the Town of Fort Frances Phone System
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