



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 27, 2007  
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Meeting Date: October 16, 2007

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager/Fire Chief, Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services

SUBJECT: Donation of Three (3) Decommissioned Fire Engines to the Rotary Clubs of the Lower Mainland of BC World Help Network (for the benefit of the National Fire Service of El Salvador)

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT, subject to Recommendations B and C below, Council approve a one time donation of three (3) City of Vancouver decommissioned Fire Engines to the Rotary Clubs of the Lower Mainland of BC World Help Network, Certificate of Incorporation Number -S-37357 Address; #315-475 Howe St. Vancouver, BC V6C 2B3 (for the benefit of the National Fire Service of El Salvador).

(This donation of decommissioned fire trucks is considered a grant and therefore requires eight affirmative votes of Council.)

- B. THAT the transfer, insurance, shipping, export and any other legal documentation required to implement Recommendation A be executed and delivered by the City's Director of Legal Services.
- C. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created or arise from Council's approval of Recommendation A unless and until the legal documentation referred to in this report is reviewed, approved, and executed by the City's Director of Legal Services.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager/Fire Chief RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

## **COUNCIL POLICY**

Approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes of Council.

## **SUMMARY**

Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services (VF&RS) staff have been working with members of the Vancouver Fire Fighters' Union and the Consulate of El Salvador to assist the El Salvador Fire Department in obtaining needed fire suppression equipment. The "Engines for El Salvador" Project Team supports the ongoing needs of the El Salvador Fire Service to provide life safety services to the citizens of El Salvador. The City of Vancouver will transfer ownership of the three fire engines to the Rotary Clubs of the Lower Mainland of BC World Help Network, a charitable organization that is coordinating the delivery of the fire trucks to El Salvador. A major goal of the project is to provide three decommissioned fire engines and related equipment to El Salvador. All associated shipping and handling costs will be donated by other organizations and will be at no cost to the City.

The Project Team is seeking the approval and support of Council to donate these Fire Trucks.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the donation of three decommissioned fire engines to the Rotary Clubs of the Lower Mainland of BC World Help Network for the benefit of the National Fire Service of El Salvador.

## **BACKGROUND**

El Salvador is a developing nation with a population of approximately 6.8 million people. Currently, it is the most densely populated country in the Americas and it is listed among the poorest countries in Latin America. El Salvador is subjected to significant tectonic activity including frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. These events have destroyed homes and infrastructure and restricted economic development. These natural forces have also led to severe landslides and devastating wildfires. In addition to these challenges, the citizens of this nation are significantly under-served with basic emergency services.

A lack of resources limits the assistance provided by the emergency service workers of El Salvador. The National Fire Service of El Salvador has 375 firefighters to provide emergency services to a population of about 6.8 million. The national capital of El Salvador, San Salvador, has a population of 600,000 people and approximately 50 assigned firefighters. In comparison, Vancouver is home to approximately 600,000 people and employs close to 750 career firefighters. The lack of personnel and equipment challenges El Salvador's ability to respond to emergencies in a timely or effective manner.

In North America, a fire service target response time for an emergency incident is approximately five minutes. In comparison, El Salvador's estimated response time is roughly thirty minutes. The longer it takes to respond to emergency events the greater the negative consequences. By assisting the El Salvadorans to increase their effectiveness and ability to

respond, the City of Vancouver can have a direct positive impact on the quality of emergency services received by some of Central America's poorest citizens.

Over a span of ten years, VF&RS has developed a relationship with the National Fire Service of El Salvador. During that time, VF&RS has donated a large amount of retired turn-out gear (fire fighting jackets, pants, helmets and gloves) to the National Fire Service of El Salvador. It is estimated that approximately 70% of the turn-out gear currently in use in El Salvador has been donated by Vancouver.

## DISCUSSION

Several nations in Central America have developed relationships with sponsoring countries. Sponsor countries assist in developing emergency services programs for the citizens of those countries. Prior to committing to assisting El Salvador, the "Engines for El Salvador" Project Team researched several Central American countries to determine where the greatest need for this type of equipment was.

The United States provides Guatemala with equipment and training. Belize has benefited from membership in the British Commonwealth and has received training and equipment from the National Fire Service of Great Britain. Honduras is currently receiving aid from other areas of Canada. Nicaragua has received assistance from Japan.

Although the need seemed to be greater in Honduras and Nicaragua, both countries lack the infrastructure and capabilities available in El Salvador to utilize and maintain three fire engines. At this time El Salvador is assisting its neighbours in Honduras and Nicaragua to enhance the fire and emergency service capabilities of these countries.

Recently, other countries in Eastern Europe or Asia have expressed interest in receiving decommissioned fire apparatus; however, these countries lack access to spare parts and training. These countries also operate under significantly different standards for vehicles and fire equipment, so there are considerable compatibility issues. These countries are also at an early stage in exploring availability of Canadian fire equipment, and have not as yet developed a local support network.

This proposed donation of three fire engines will provide a positive impact on El Salvador's firefighting capabilities.

At this time, no further donations of fire engines or vehicles to other countries are contemplated.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The most significant cost of this project is in the shipping of the fire engines. Over the past ten years, Gearbulk Shipping has provided delivery of retired turn out gear from VF&RS to El Salvador at no cost to the City of Vancouver. All dockside handling and charges have been covered by another partner in this project, Pangaea Logistics. Gearbulk and Pangaea have each committed to again provide these services at no cost to the City of Vancouver.

The only costs to be borne by the City of Vancouver is the potential loss of revenue that may have been received had these three fire engines been offered for public auction. The foregone revenue from the sale of the three engines at auction has been estimated by Hub Engines of Abbotsford to be \$18,000 to \$22,000.00. To confirm the estimated value, VF&RS in discussion with Equipment Services and Materials Management Staff researched comparable used fire engines from other sources, such as the internet and previous auction sales of used fire equipment. As a result, a value of \$8,000 per unit has been assigned for a total of \$24,000. Under a typical sale at auction, the net proceeds would accrue to the Truck and Equipment Plant account which provides financing for Fire's fleet. Given the benefits of the project against the relatively low dollar amount, VF&RS has agreed, on a one-time basis, to provide the estimated foregone revenue equivalent of \$24,000 to the Truck and Equipment Plant account, through a transfer from its operating budget. All costs associated with the transfer of title will be the responsibility of Rotary World Help Network.

### **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

Most of the logistics, planning and fund-raising for the "Engines for El Salvador Project" to date have been carried out by VF&RS personnel on their off-duty time. The Project Team members have committed to this project by providing their skills and expertise on a voluntary basis. This commitment extends to several VF&RS personnel accompanying the three fire engines to El Salvador and providing some initial training and familiarization to the El Salvadoran fire personnel at no cost to the City of Vancouver. Since these VF&RS members will not be engaged in a City authorized sanctioned activity, they are doing so outside of the scope of their duties as City employees and are therefore not covered under the City's WorkSafe BC insurance.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Fire Underwriter's Survey (FUS), the suggested life span of fire trucks is 12 to 15 years. The units that are being proposed for donation are between 20 and 25 years old. VF&RS fire trucks undergo rigorous annual and provincially-mandated inspections. The costs of rising maintenance costs and lack of new technology in older units, validates the guidelines set by NFPA and FUS. However, by donating these three fire engines, they can continue to be productively used by a small, developing country such as El Salvador for years to come, thus substantially deferring the point in time at which they might have otherwise (if used in North America) been discarded or used for scrap materials only.

### **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The donation of this fire equipment will improve the emergency services provided to the citizens of El Salvador.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Recently, VF&RS purchased 13 replacement fire engines and has begun to receive the first of these, with completion of the order expected by the end of 2007. Excluding the three engines

being donated, the remaining surplus fire engines will be sold at auction as per City procurement procedures for the disposal of surplus equipment and under the direction of City Purchasing and Equipment Services Branch. Cost recoveries of surplus trucks at auction will accrue to the Truck and Equipment Plant Account to help offset the cost of new vehicle purchases.

Upon approval by Council, the City's Director of Legal Services (in consultation with the Director of Risk Management and Fire Chief) will ensure that legal title, insurance liability, legal liability, shipping costs, and risks are appropriately and effectively transferred concurrently with pick-up of the engines from the City.

The "Engines for El Salvador" Committee has generated over \$13,000, through developing partnerships, particularly with the Rotary Clubs of the Lower Mainland of BC World Help Network and various Rotary Clubs throughout the Lower Mainland, to cover costs associated with shipping the three fire engines to El Salvador. Any costs associated with the Committee members' travel or accommodation will be at the members' own expense.

The three fire engines equipped with hose, nozzles and fittings, will be shipped to El Salvador onboard a Gearbulk Shipping freighter. Arrival of the Fire Engines in El Salvador should follow within a two week period. All loading and off-loading, customs clearing and related legal documentation will be the sole responsibility of Pangaea Logistics, the Consulate of El Salvador and the National Fire Service of El Salvador. The three decommissioned fire engine unit and chassis serial numbers are as follows:

Engine Unit # \_A9155 (VIN 2HTNGVTR7GCB12117)  
Engine Unit # \_A 9199 (VIN 2HTD10451CCA16490)  
Engine Unit # \_A9188 (VIN 2HTD10453CCA16488)

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Upon approval and support of Council to donate these surplus fire engines, VF&RS will be responsible for issuing a media release to inform the public of this worthwhile program.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges for El Salvador's emergency services have been noted in this report. Other agencies and private citizens have also participated in a broad effort to improve delivery of emergency services to El Salvador. With the addition of these fire engines, the National Fire Service of El Salvador will be able to expand its response area to better assist its population. A relatively minor contribution in monetary terms by the City of Vancouver is expected to have a significant positive impact on the citizens of El Salvador.

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