

Donation of Ambulances

Date:	January 18, 2010
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All

SUMMARY

At its meeting on January 4, 2010, the Executive Committee requested staff to report on a proposal by Councillors Mihevc, Moscoe, Fletcher and Vaughan to donate to El Salvador one ambulance per year for the next four years and to provide right of first refusal to the Caravan of Hope for up to 13 additional retired EMS vehicles per year for four years, to be purchased at a pre-determined price.

This report recommends that Council not proceed with the proposal, outlines the policy and operational impacts of the proposal and the current status of the Toronto-Soyapango partnership, part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Technical Partnership Program which will formally end in 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. Council not proceed with the December 4, 2009 proposal entitled “Donation of Ambulances to El Salvador”.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications as a result of this report’s recommendations. However, if Council decides to support the proposal for an annual donation of ambulances to El Salvador it would result in lost auction revenue for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The cost in 2010 would be between \$9,200 and \$11,000; and over four years approximately \$40,000. EMS relies on its auction revenue to support the purchase of new ambulances. EMS has committed to reducing its Fleet Reserve Account by \$250,000 gross in 2010 and \$500,000 in 2011 and beyond, in order to meet budgetary constraints. To achieve these reductions, EMS will defer some vehicle purchases planned for 2010, and will lengthen its fleet replacement cycle starting in 2011 (by purchasing

fewer new ambulances each year). It may have fewer ambulances for other uses, relying more on auction revenues.

DECISION HISTORY

The City has had a formal partnership with the City of Soyapango, El Salvador since 1998. The partnership does include a specific component related to emergency medical services or equipment. However, this matter has been raised during the partnership and there have been several requests that are relevant to the latest proposal.

In 2006 Council adopted an International Disaster Relief Policy to guide the City's response to communities in need following a disaster and also the numerous requests the City receives for donating vehicles and equipment. The policy states that the City will no longer donate vehicles and equipment.

www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/pof7rpt/cl016.pdf

In December 2007 Council approved the donation of one decommissioned ambulance to Soyapango.

www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-9000.pdf

In January 2009 Council approved the donation of two decommissioned ambulances to Soyapango at the request of the Mayor of Soyapango through the Caravan of Hope.

www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-17895.pdf

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The formal partnership with Soyapango originated in 1998 through the FCM Municipal Partnership Program. The partnership has been renewed several times over the years and the focus has been primarily in the areas of financial management and information technology. Since 2001 the partnership has been informally enhanced through the Caravan of Hope and fundraising efforts to send equipment and supplies to El Salvador.

COMMENTS

Policy Implications

The request to donate ambulances does not comply with Council's International Disaster Relief Policy. The policy states that the City will no longer donate vehicles or equipment due to the various challenges such as shipping costs, compatibility of donated goods with local infrastructure, and maintenance and repair concerns. The City receives many requests every year for the donation of vehicles and equipment and generally turns them down in compliance with the policy.

Operational and Financial Issues

EMS will have difficulty in accommodating the current request. EMS has committed to reducing its Fleet Reserve Account by \$250,000 gross in 2010 and \$500,000 in 2011 and beyond. To achieve these reductions, EMS will defer some vehicle purchases planned for

2010, and will lengthen its fleet replacement cycle starting in 2011 (through purchasing less new ambulances each year). Therefore, it may have fewer ambulances available for other uses, and will have to rely more on auction revenues.

Right of First Refusal

The request to grant the Caravan of Hope right of first refusal for 52 ambulances over four years is problematic from an equity and transparency perspective. The City receives many requests for ambulance donations which are denied in keeping with Council policy. The City informs the organizations of the opportunity to purchase the vehicles at a reasonable rate at auction. Therefore, granting first right of refusal to the Caravan of Hope could be perceived as inequitable to other organizations.

Formal Government involvement in the proposal

The City has not received a formal request from the City of Soyapango or from the El Salvador government for this proposal. The City does receive several formal requests from governments around the world each year and generally denies these requests.

The Toronto-Soyapango Partnership

The Toronto-Soyapango Partnership is long-standing and successful. The terms of reference for the Partnership focuses primarily on municipal finances, taxation, solid waste management and information technology, and has not formally included ambulance services and donations of equipment.

The City's partnership with Soyapango ends on March 31, 2010 since CIDA, which funds the FCM Municipal Partnership Program, is re-evaluating its program models and determining the world regions where it wishes to invest. In the coming year FCM will identify new partnership opportunities that Council may wish to consider. Due to limited financial resources the City undertakes the partnerships through FCM since many costs are absorbed through FCM funding.

Staff are exploring opportunities to formally recognize the Partnership and the valuable contributions of the community and the City partners over the next months.

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SIGNATURE

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