

2025 - 2026 Budget Public Works Department Proposed Issue Papers



Public Works Dept Issue Papers - Summary

	Issue Paper	Amount		Funding
		2025	2026	
#1	Digital Mobile Radio System	\$100,000	\$103,000	Levy – New
#2	CLOSED SESSION – Security Systems Improvements			Levy – New Reserves

Issue Paper #1 – Digital Mobile Radio System – Slide 1

- Justification for Request (per Multi-year Budget Policy)
 - June 2023 County Council passed the following motion:

“**That** County Council direct staff to proceed with upgrading to a Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) System to provide County wide radio coverage for Fire Services and Public Works according to the updated Statement of Work prepared by BearCom Communications dated May 16, 2023 in the amount of \$492,671.14 (excluding HST and contingency), noting a total project cost of \$526,342.15 (including non-recoverable HST and contingency) which is over the existing project budget by \$163,942.15; and

Further That County Council approve the budget shortfall of \$163,942.15 to be paid fully by the County, being transferred from the County General Reserve; and

Further That County Council approve the annual maintenance and operation costs, to be borne solely by Northumberland County.”
- The additional capital cost was included in the 2024 budget, however the additional annual maintenance and operation costs were not included in the 2025/2026 budget

Issue Paper #1 – Digital Mobile Radio System – Slide 2

- Background

- Northumberland County communications tower is approximately 57 years old and has reached the end of its service life
- In 2016, County and member municipalities met with Turris Communications (now BearCom communications) to discuss joint communications to prepare for removal of the tower
- BearCom provided a layout for a DMR system that links individual radio systems to provide County wide coverage
- The DMR system provides better coverage by using additional tower sites and frequencies
- The DMR system has been installed and will be activated for all Fire Services and Public Works in the County

- Consultation/Options

- The project has been undertaken with constant communication and collaboration with member municipal fire chiefs and public works managers

Issue Paper #1 – Digital Mobile Radio System – Slide 3

- Financial Impact

- As directed by Council, the costs will include all annual maintenance and operating costs for the new DMR system equipment owned by the County including: tower leasing, electricity, generator maintenance, equipment maintenance, licenses and propane)
- 2025 - \$100,000*
- 2026 - \$103,000*

* Waiting for additional information to confirm costs

Issue Paper #1 – Digital Mobile Radio System – Slide 4

- Risk Considerations

- New DMR system uses 8 towers with new and existing equipment installed to provide the County wide DMR paging and radio communications
- Routine maintenance of all equipment is required to ensure equipment is working properly, proactively address any issues, maintain warranties, etc.
- If the equipment is not properly maintained, there is the risk of the paging and radio communications not working, directly impacting fire services and public works
- If on-going operational costs including tower rental fees, utility costs, etc. are not paid, would be in breach of agreements with Tower owners

Issue Paper #1 – Digital Mobile Radio System – Slide 5

- Impact to Member Municipalities/Partners
 - Improved connectivity and coverage for Fire Services and Public Works
 - Seamless communication between municipalities
 - Cost savings for annual operations and maintenance of radio equipment
 - Agreements with County about who is responsible for various costs and services
 - Member municipalities will still be responsible for the operation and maintenance of equipment owned by the municipality such as:
 - towers
 - generators and propane
 - equipment at fire stations and public works buildings
 - handheld radios, including licensing

Questions

