



# Municipality of Port Hope

## Staff Report

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### **Report Title:** Fire Communications Tower Agreement with Northumberland County

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**Report to:** Committee of the Whole

**Date of meeting:** August 6, 2024

**Report Author:**

Jason Williams, Director, Protective Services

**Department responsible:**

Protective Services

**Report Number:** PS-12-24

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### **Recommended Action:**

That a by-law be presented to Council to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute a Licence and Access Agreement, with the County of Northumberland, for the communication base located at 200 Fox Road.

### **Highlights:**

- The County of Northumberland has taken on the financial responsibility for digital radio communications for Fire and Emergency Services across Northumberland County.
- This agreement (**Attachment 1**) permits the County to utilize the Municipality's Water Tower located at 200 Fox Road as a communication base that will be equipped with updated radio communications equipment and an emergency backup generator.

### **Background:**

On June 21, 2023, Northumberland County Council passed Resolution 2023-06-21-431. This resolution begins the process of shifting financial responsibility for digital radio communication equipment from the lower-tier municipalities to the upper-tier (County). As a result, instead of each lower-tier municipality individually paying for their radio communications equipment and annual maintenance, the combined cost will be covered by the County moving forward.

This change aims to streamline operations, reduce costs, and enhance the quality and consistency of communication services across the region. Bearcom Telecommunications is the current provider for radio communications for the Municipality of Port Hope Fire and Emergency Services and will continue to be the provider once Northumberland County assumes responsibility.

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**Discussion:**

A crucial aspect of the transition to digital radio communications from lower tier to upper tier municipalities involves the subletting of the current communications tower from the Municipality of Port Hope to Northumberland County to ensure continued maintenance and functionality. This change will not cause any issues in the response of the Port Hope Fire and Emergency Services but will assist with enhanced, more consistent communications during emergencies going forward.

**Financial Considerations:**

All costs associated with the project, including future maintenance and removal/relocation are being borne by Northumberland County. There is no direct impact on the Fire Service budget related to the installation and/or maintenance of the new equipment as part of the project.

Northumberland County Council has provided direction that all capital and operating costs (not including radio licencing which is a normal annual expenditure for the Fire Service) associated with the project will be the responsibility of Northumberland County. Port Hope Fire and Emergency Services will have to undertake re-programming all portable radios and fire department pagers which will have a cost of approximately \$3,600.00 which will likely occur in the fall of 2024.

**Communication and Public Engagement:**

Residents will not be impacted by this agreement and no interruptions to service will take place. Additional communications will not be required in relation to this agreement. Details will be shared through regular communications following adoption by Council.

**Conclusion:**

Port Hope Fire and Emergency Services is one of seven Municipal Fire Services within Northumberland County. This agreement with the County of Northumberland will ensure a more reliable and effective emergency radio system across our Municipality and will benefit the members of the fire service and the community.

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Draft By-law to Authorize Execution of a Licence and Access Agreement with Northumberland County