

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

24 SEPTEMBER 2008

Sole Source Purchase of Thermal Imaging Camera

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board authorize the purchase of a Thermal Imaging Camera (FLIR) used in Air2 from L-3 Communications Wescam as a sole source purchase, at a cost not to exceed \$130,000 USD; and,
2. That the Chief be authorized to enter into an agreement, subject to the approval of the Region's Legal Services as to form and content, with L-3 Communications Wescam for the immediate supply of a loaner camera at no cost until March 2009 when L-3 Communications Wescam can supply the new camera.

SYNOPSIS

The York Regional Police Helicopter, Air2 uses thermal image camera technology in daily operations. The infrared camera identifies heat sources that assist in a number of situations. This system is critical in the location of missing vulnerable persons, suspect apprehension pursuits, arrests of wanted persons and the location and identification of indoor marijuana grow operations.

In June 2003 the Board approved the purchase of the current thermal imaging camera. The camera has been used on a daily basis accumulating a higher than average number of hours in use. Early in 2008 unacceptable images were attributed to a failure in camera operations necessitating extensive repairs or replacement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As the cost of this sole source purchase exceeds \$100,000, Section 16.1(d) of Purchasing By-law No. 11-06 requires Board approval.

In addition, approval of purchases from future budgets requires Board approval under Section 5.2 of Purchasing By-law No. 11-06.

The cost of this camera including the refurbishing of the turret and the loaner camera has been estimated at \$130,000 USD by L3 Communications Wescam. The anticipated delivery date for the new camera is March 2009. Funds will be included in the 2009 Proposed Operating Budget for this purchase.

BACKGROUND

York Regional Police purchased the L-3 Communications Wescam 12DS200 Dual Sensor Camera in August 2003 at a cost of \$205,000 USD. At the time, this was the most advanced thermal imaging camera system available.

The thermal imaging camera technology allows the Tactical Flight Officer aboard Air2 to identify heat sources on the ground. This technology works in both day and night settings, however it is of particular value at night. This camera system has resulted in a number of successful conclusions in missing vulnerable person searches, arrests, suspect apprehension pursuits and the identification of indoor marijuana grow operations.

Repairs to the current camera system were required in 2006 and 2007 resulting in a total cost of \$52,513 USD. In early 2008, the camera experienced problems resulting in unacceptable images. As a result of this failure, the camera was assessed by the manufacturer to require extensive repairs.

L-3 Communications Wescam is introducing the next generation of dual thermal imaging camera technology. The quality of the new camera and imagery far exceeds the capabilities of the current system. In order to ensure optimal results while being financially responsible, L3 Communications Wescam has provided three options.

OPTION 1

Repair the current camera system at a cost of \$46,317 USD with no warranty provisions.

OPTION 2

Upgrade our current system to new technology at a cost of \$130,000 USD. This sensor package upgrade is anticipated to be completed by March 2009 and is complete with a one year warranty. L3 Communications Wescam will provide a free loaner camera immediately at no charge pending the delivery of the new product.

OPTION 3

Purchase a new dual thermal imaging camera system at an estimated cost of \$225,000 USD. This option also encompasses a one year warranty.

As a result of an analysis of the options presented and recognizing the importance of Air2 in supporting police operations with the much needed thermal imaging capability, Option 2 is being recommended as most effective. This approach takes advantage of the current mounting equipment, the immediate availability of a temporary camera and the fact that the requisite engineering approvals for this equipment being affixed to Air2 are already in place.

Armand P. La Barge, O.O.M.
Chief of Police

APL: bs