



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By:

The Honourable Wayne Caines, JP, MP

Minister of National Security

A New Government Public Safety Radio System for Bermuda

February 28th, 2020

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to provide to this Honorable House of an update on the Government's new Public Safety Radio System.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that the Government of Bermuda issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to replace its existing radio platform on 6th October 2017.

The RFP procurement process commenced with an open procurement on www.gov.bm and included on-line advertising in international magazine - Radio Resource International. Email notifications were also provided to local and international communications companies who produced the types of technology addressed in the RFP.

Mr. Speaker, all of the bidders were from Bermudian companies. Each company partnered with an offshore manufacturer that expanded our pool of the **best public safety technologies available**. Seven (7) addendums/clarifications were issued in response to questions from the bidding firms.

Mr. Speaker, the Evaluation Committee was made up of representatives from the Ministry of National Security Headquarters, the Bermuda Police Service (BPS), the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Information and Digital Technologies (IDT).

Mr. Speaker, each one of the proposers were invited to an interview with the Committee in order to clarify issues and make presentations on their systems. Committee members then rated each proposal using the standard procurement evaluation matrix (modified for the technical requirements of this procurement).

On 20th May 2019, the Ministry of National Security and the successful contractor, Electronic Communications Limited (ECL) signed a contract at a value of \$4,174,057.92.

Mr. Speaker, ECL promised to provide a new radio communication system with state of the art technology that would assist the public safety agencies of Bermuda in providing enhanced services and safety to the Government and the Public.

Mr. Speaker, some of the key elements from their winning proposal included:

- The transition from the old analogue voice only radio system to one that features modern digital voice and data capabilities;
- An increase in radio performance which included enhanced coverage and greater capacity;
- Interoperable communications for all government agencies and key partners during an emergency or crisis;
- Enhanced radio system redundancy and reliability that will minimize the impact of failures due to hurricanes or other unexpected events; and
- A cost that **will reduce** the Government's annual radio expenditures by **approximately 60% over the fifteen year life of the new system**.

Mr. Speaker, It is important to note, the Government of Bermuda normally pays a **minimum of two million dollars annually** spread across several Government Departments and Quangos for two-way radio communication services some of which are used by 911 emergency service and ancillary services. A key driver for this proactive and cost cutting change is the Government's Public Sector Reform initiative.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative fits right into the initiative's objectives of:

- Centralized Telecommunications Operations;
- Cost Avoidance Methodologies (future cost impacts);
- Cost Reduction Methodologies (current cost impacts);
- Strategies for the Reallocation of Cost Savings; and
- Rationalizations of Current and Proposed Telecommunications Contracts.

Our model has even become an example of the way forward for the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of this initiative is also a collaboration across all of the Government's core public safety Departments and Quangos. Currently, there are three (3) committee levels: Steering, Technical and Operational.

Our collaborative project also has essential involvement from the Information & Digital Technology Office (IDT). **Mr. Speaker**, I have had an opportunity to visit dispatch training exercises for both the Bermuda Police Service and the Bermuda Fire & Rescue Services, **to kick the tires myself so to speak...**

Mr. Speaker, the dispatchers examined things like:

- How to call a group;
- How to call an individual;
- How to send a text message;
- How to talk between their console and another console; and
- How to talk between their console and another console in another location.

Mr. Speaker, I have also had an opportunity to speak with a few officers who are currently using their handsets in the first phase of the rollout. The officers commented that they found their units to be clearer than previous, making it easier to hear in high stress and loud working environments.

I held one of the new handsets and found it to be lighter, more rugged with longer lasting battery life in addition to being water proof. **Mr. Speaker**, the handsets can be programmed over the air and talk groups can be dynamically assigned drastically reducing the requirement to bring radios to a central location to be reprogrammed.

For the 1st time in Bermuda, every radio on the system across the various departments will be able to speak to each other. The handsets have high levels of encryption which will help ensure that the system is safe from 21st-century security threats.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about this accomplishment. I must emphasize that this Government and more specifically, this ministry will continue to seek out opportunities for cost savings while identifying the potential for efficiency gains without compromising on quality of service to keep Bermuda Safe.

Mr. Speaker, I want Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda to know that this new radio platform will enable public safety agencies to coordinate more efficiently than in past days. This implementation is a critical technological resource for the Bermuda Police Service, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, the Royal Bermuda Regiment and the Emergency Medical Technicians to carry out their duties with greater effectiveness, in ultimately serving and protecting the Bermuda public at large.

Mr. Speaker, the public safety benefits of this platform includes:

- **A more efficient deployment** of officers and **better response time** for the public.
- **Greater operational coordination** between public safety agencies (Police-Fire-Ambulance-Regiment) routinely and especially in time of emergencies, such as Hurricanes or other natural or manmade disasters.
- Acceleration in communication and officer reachability through instant connection.

In short, this platform will ensure **a professional approach** and will **enhance trust and public confidence** in the ability of the departments within this ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the Government's new Public Safety Radio System will have many points of resiliency and redundancy. Honourable Members, the implementation and rollout of our new radio system will continue over the next few weeks and I will provide another update in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, this collaborative initiative also includes the support of our current vendor – East End Telecom. Thank you for your many years of service.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Government's Radio Platform Information Project working group which includes;

- Mr. Vernon Wears Jr. – Policy & Project Coordinator for the Ministry of National Security;
- Mr. Darrin Simons - Deputy Commissioner of the Bermuda Police Service;
- Mr. Dana Lovell - Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the Bermuda Fire & Rescue Service;
- Mr. Eugene F. Bassett Jr. - Network Engineer - Design & Implementation for the Department of Information & Digital Technology Office; and
- The Government's Radio Communication Consultant, Mr. Mark Pallans of Pallans' Associates who has acted as our subject matter expert throughout this process.

Finally, **Mr. Speaker**, I would like to thank my Cabinet Colleagues; particularly;

- The Minister of Finance, the Honourable Curtis Dickerson, JP, MP
- The Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Lt. Col David Burch JP, MP and
- The Premier and Minister of Cabinet, the Honourable David Burt JP, MP.

Without your assistance none of this would be happening.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.