

Snowclearing review contract awarded

Councillor says 22 weeks is too long

By DANIEL MACEACHERN

THE TELEGRAM

A St. John's councillor says a planned review of the city's snow-clearing operations will take too long to implement changes for next winter.

At city council's regular meeting Monday, councillors approved awarding KPMG of St. John's a \$149,000 contract to complete a review of the city's winter maintenance. A separately announced \$30,000 study of snow-dumping alternatives will be included in the overall review.

"I think it's an important step forward for this council," said Coun. Jonathan Galgay, chairman of the city's public works committee. "Hopefully once this review is completed, we'll be able to take the appropriate time before winter sets in and perhaps make some changes that are necessary, ones that we can move rather quickly on, and others obviously will take some other considerations, such as funding and so on."

But Coun. Art Puddister said

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St. John's Coun. Art Puddister

KPMG's 22-week timeline is too long.

"I'm hopeful that the consultant will be able to show us some way perhaps we can tweak the services we provide," he said. "But I think there's an expectation on the part of the public that we increase our service levels, in particular sidewalks, and in order for Mr. Mackey and staff to be able to do sidewalks properly, to me, in my personal opinion, it means more equipment, extra people, and extra cash."

Puddister said he's concerned the city won't have enough time to implement recommended improvements in time for next winter.

"Perhaps we need, in our budget discussions, to have a draft copy of the report and perhaps authorize Mr.

Mackey and his staff to perhaps pre-order some equipment, if that's the feeling of council."

Galgay said the process shouldn't be rushed.

"I think we've set the parameter in place," he said. "People have an expectation that we're going to do the report."

The city received four submissions for the contract before the May 9 deadline, one of which the city disqualified as incomplete. The others — in addition to KPMG, submissions came from Covenco of Toronto and Mercury Associates of Charlotte, N.C. — were considered by the public works evaluation committee. Covenco's bid was \$110,000 for a four-month study, while Mercury's was \$85,810 for three months. Galgay noted contracts don't always go to the lowest bidder.

"It's always based on an assessment tool that they go through," he said. "It's all about expertise and whether or not they can meet certain requirements."

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