10
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONTRACT AWARD

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 30, 2006, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. York Region enter into a contract with Shepell.fgi (formerly FGIworld), for the provision of the York Region Employee Assistance Program.

2. The contract for services should commence on February 1, 2007 for a period of two years in the amount of $304,347.20, with an option of a third year, if services are satisfactory.

3. The Commissioner of Corporate Services be authorized to sign the contract with Shepell.fgi, subject to review by Legal Services.

4. The Commissioner of Corporate Services be authorized to extend the contract for the optional third year if service proves satisfactory.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council of the results of the Request for Proposal for the provision of the Region's Employee Assistance Program and to recommend the preferred service provider.

3. BACKGROUND

An Employee Assistance Program has been provided for Regional staff since 1988. The implementation of the EAP program dates back to 1986 when Letters of Intent were signed with the then CUPE Locals 1953 and 1514. The letters of intent were signed by the Employer on the basis that such a program would be for all Regional employees and not just members of the specific bargaining groups. A Letter of Intent, stipulating that the Employer agrees to continue the current Employee Assistance Program, conditional on the contract with the consultant being renewed by Regional Council remains in the CUPE 905 Collective Agreement.

York Region has engaged the services of FGI for provision of its EAP counselling since 2001. The service provided has been very satisfactory, well received and well utilized by staff.

The Region's Purchasing By-law necessitates a review of ongoing service provisions on a three year basis. Accordingly, a request for proposal was issued in August 2006. Submissions were received from four service providers. The submissions were reviewed and evaluated by the York Region EAP Committee which comprises of representation of union and non-union staff.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Representatives from the EAP Committee and Supplies and Services evaluated the proposals in a two step process according to the following criteria:

- Qualifications
- Relevant experience on similar projects
- References
- Responsiveness and completeness of the submission
- Demonstrated understanding of Regional requirements
- Administrative capabilities
- Location/geographic ability to deliver services
- Demonstrated client-centred approach
- Capacity to protect confidentiality
- Demonstrated ability to refer clients to professionals
- Innovation of solution offered (value added)
- Price

Step 1

The initial evaluation was conducted individually by the members of the evaluation team. All submissions were reviewed and each committee member ranked the submissions.

Step 2

The evaluation team as a whole performed the secondary evaluation in order to arrive at a consensus. A weighted point system, based on the importance of each criterion, was used in the evaluation of the submissions. After reviewing the RFP response portion of each proposal as a team, the four submissions were ranked as follows:

Proponent	Rating
FGIworld	62.0
Warren Shepell Limited	60.4
Family Services Employee Assistance	47.8
Baylis & Associates	39.4

It was determined that two of the submissions did not meet the technical aspects required for the service provision and two were very positive. The two acceptable proponents were FGIworld and Warren Shepell Limited. The price submissions were evaluated with the following results:

Proponent	Technical Rating	Price Comparison (3 years)
FGIworld	62.0	$461,086.00
Warren Shepell Limited	60.4	$504,856.80
Family Services Employee Assistance	47.8	$333,391.20
Baylis & Associates	39.4	$255,633.84

FGIworld was the successful proponent as they scored highest in the technical aspects and also offered the preferred service at a lower price than the other acceptable bid.

Once the evaluation process was completed, it was revealed to the evaluation team that in September 2006, after the submission of the proposals but prior to the evaluation, FGIworld and Warren Shepell Limited had merged their companies to create a new EAP service provider, Shepell.fgi. Given the unique circumstance of a merger occurring between two of the proponents after they had each submitted individual proposals, advice was sought as to the appropriate evaluation procedure to be followed. In consultation with the Purchasing Manager and Counsel, it was determined that each submission should be evaluated as a separate, stand-alone proposal. This was the procedure followed and resulted in the selection of FGIworld as the preferred provider; however, York Region will be the recipient of the broadened service available as a result of the merger of these two leading EAP providers.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The annual cost for the provision of the Employee Assistance Program will be $152,173.60 inclusive of taxes. This cost will not fluctuate based on utilization.

Sufficient funds have been included in the Human Resource Services budget to cover the costs of the Employee Assistance Program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region's choice of an EAP provider will have no impact on the local municipalities; however, it should be noted that FGI is a regionally based business, located in the Town of Richmond Hill.

7. CONCLUSION

EAP programs provide a financial return on program investment. Research indicates that for every dollar spent on an Employee Assistance Program, there is a return to the plan sponsor of $4.00 through reduced costs in employee absenteeism and improved productivity. The Employee Assistance Program is the cornerstone of York Region's Workplace Wellness program.

Since 1986 York Region has recognized the value of providing an EAP for its staff. It is appropriate to continue to provide this important employee benefit.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.