



STAFF REPORT

Department: Protective and Development Services

Meeting Chair: Councillor Paul Raymond

Meeting Date: May 12, 2021

Report No.: **PDS-2021-41**

Report Title: **Acquisition of a Sever 650K Airboat**

RECOMMENDATION:

That Staff Report No. PDS-2021-41 regarding Acquisition of a Sever 650K Airboat be received; and

That Council endorse the fundraising committee's initiative to purchase a Sever 650K Airboat; and

That staff support be provided to the committee, at the discretion of the CAO.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

After recent fatalities that occurred during unstable ice conditions on Georgian Bay, a group of Tay residents volunteered to raise funds for the purchase of an airboat for Tay Fire and Emergency Services (TFES).

ANALYSIS:

Currently in Southern Georgian Bay, there are no means available to transport first responders quickly and safely to scenes where the possibility of unstable ice exists far from shore. An airboat would greatly assist TFES in performing rescues in adverse weather, water, and ice conditions in both a safe and expedient manner.

Deployment

The craft would be stored at Station 5 (Victoria Harbour), as it is centrally located with multiple water access points, and has an outstanding turn out to calls. The current Rescue 3 vehicle is coming to the end of its lifecycle in 2023. The replacement selected would serve the role of rescue truck, but additionally, would be rated to tow the craft.

Once the craft is in service and we have had time to determine how best to deploy it, we could explore the possibility of using one of the shoreline properties owned by the Township to erect a small building to store it which would allow for direct access to the water/ice. Alternatively, staff could look into the potential of a partnership with a local marina or property owner with a suitable storage facility.

There will be 15 operators selected to receive training, based on a number of factors, which may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Previous marine experience (on Georgian Bay an asset)
- Distance to the station
- Percentage of calls made
- Years of service

Only one operator would be required to deploy the craft. Additional crew would be members of the Technical Rescue Team, who would be delivered to the scene, perform the rescue, and return quickly and safely to awaiting allied agencies.

Capabilities

The Sever 650K is a 24' landing-craft style hybrid airboat, which combines the best features of both a traditional airboat and an air-cushioned vehicle (hovercraft) providing year-round use without the cold, noisy and jarring ride of a traditional airboat.

The Sever can operate in shallow water, marshy environments, over snow, open water and onto land, and has an enclosed heated and sound proofed cabin for up to eight people, allowing for quality treatment of our patients. The open front deck allows for rescue operations, and the transport of firefighting equipment with direct access to the cabin. These unique features will allow TFES to broaden response capabilities to a variety of calls, for example medical response to Methodist Island and area fish huts, to vessels in distress, water/ice rescue, snowmobile accidents and marine fires.

The craft will be outfitted with FLIR (forward looking infrared radar), a traditional radar unit, a GPS with plotter overlay allowing the craft to safely navigate the area waterways and in any weather conditions.

Agreements

The Township has a reciprocal agreement in place with Midland, Penetanguishene and Tiny Township, which allows for the supply of firefighting equipment and services without cost or obligation.

The Southern Georgian Bay OPP Detachment Commander is in full support of this initiative, and will assist in having an agreement signed by the OPP. In addition, the Township of Georgian Bay has expressed interest in signing a similar agreement to the one we currently have in place for the use of their boat(s).

Staff contacted Severn Township to determine their level of interest, and they are exploring the possibilities of entering into an agreement with us for the response to calls on Matchedash Bay.

Training

All operators will attend a six-hour training session highlighting the specific features of the craft and airboat operations. In addition, operators will be certified in Small Vessel Operations Proficiency (SVOP) and Marine Disasters and Emergencies –A3 (MED-A3). Associated operational guidelines will be created and implemented.

Maintenance

The craft will have a standard Chevrolet car engine allowing for easy access to available parts. The use of a standard car engine in an open orientation will make maintenance easier, as our in-house mechanic can maintain the engine and our current emergency vehicle technician (mobile mechanic) who maintains our apparatus has experience working on other emergency services airboats. One of the many marinas in our area can service the marine components of the craft.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPACT:

Fundraising

The group has committed to raise the necessary funds for the purchase of the craft, associated navigation and safety equipment, initial training costs and 5 years of maintenance and insurance. A summary is as follows:

Item	Funding
Sever 650K	\$162,000
Vessel specific training	\$4,000
Trailer	\$15,000
Taxes, Shipping Duty & brokerage fees	\$65,082
Navigation & Safety equipment/installation	\$50,000
Training (SVOP & MED-A3) \$600 per person @ 15 individuals trained	\$9,000
Annual insurance for 5 years at \$6,000 per year	\$30,000
Annual maintenance cost for 5 years	\$7,500
Total amount	\$342,582

The group's commitment to provide 5 years of running costs, and the Sever 650K's expected life span of 30+ years will allow us the flexibility to prove the concept, then based on the crafts usage, determine whether or not to begin transferring to reserves.

Throughout the process, the fundraising committee may require some staff support including, but not limited to the Fire Chief, Financial Services, and Communications Specialist.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Tay Open – Increasing transparency about decision-making that affects the community.

Staff remains committed to finding ways to improve level of service for our residents, and increase safety for our first responders. The acquisition of an airboat, purchased through fundraising efforts of a group of Tay residents, is a cost effective way to enhance service delivery for the municipality.

CONCLUSION:

Staff greatly appreciates the efforts of the fundraising group, and feels that the Sever 650K would assist Tay Fire and Emergency Services by broadening its ability to quickly and safely respond to calls on water, ice and island properties. Therefore, staff recommends that Council endorse the fundraising committee's initiative to purchase the Sever 650K airboat, and that staff provide support to the committee at the discretion of the CAO.

Prepared By:

Date: May 4, 2021

Shawn Aymer, CMMIII Fire Service Executive
Fire Chief/CEMC

Recommended By:

Date: May 5, 2021

Steven Farquharson, B.URPL, MCIP, RPP
General Manager, Protective and Development Services

Reviewed By:

Date: May 5, 2021

Lindsay Barron, CPA, CGA, HBCom.
Chief Administrative Officer