MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

REPORT NO. 036-18

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

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MLHU WIDE AREA NETWORK (WAN) SERVICE PROVIDER IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health approve entering into a contract with start.ca to establish a Wide Area Network (WAN) service, as recommended by the Finance & Facilities Committee.

Key Points
- Following an informal Wide Area Network (WAN) service provider request for proposals, start.ca was identified as the preferred proponent.
- The MLHU WAN connects all of the MLHU's sites to each other, and is the connection to the Internet for all data services. The MLHU WAN is the backbone of all the Health Unit's IT services.
- The projected cost to the Health Unit to enter into this agreement is $35,700, which represents an increase of 2.9%, or $1,032 annually, over the current contract. This contract includes data centre services, and will reduce future expenditures on servers.

Background

Information Technology (IT) has identified numerous improvements and advancements in wide-area networking available to MLHU today, which were not valid or possible solutions in the past. Many of the IT services proposed for or currently supported at MLHU require a fast, reliable connection that can provide seamless services for all users. The current WAN is not an acceptable strategy when future usage requirements are considered. Advances in fibre networking and competition among Internet service providers (ISPs) now provide more options and greater flexibility.

Procurement Process

MLHU Procurement and Stronghold Services contacted key ISPs capable of supplying Internet services to all Health Unit locations, together with access to a data centre. On-site visits were conducted and proposals were received from two ISPs.

Start.ca is the recommended ISP for this enhancement. The contract has a three-year term, and allows MLHU to move from its current 50 King Street and 201 Queens Avenue locations in downtown London (i.e., within the start.ca fibre network) without penalty. Rogers will remain the ISP for the Strathroy location. There are limited options available in that area. These recommended ISPs submitted the lowest-cost proposals and met the requirements set forth by the MLHU.

Financial Impacts

The current cost for Internet services for all three locations is $2,889/month, or $34,668 annually (before taxes); this includes a mix of fibre, virtual circuits, and DSL modems. The proposed cost of the network

enhancements is $2,975/month, or $35,700 annually (before taxes). The cost of this improvement represents an $86/month increase, or $1,032 annually, over the current WAN costs, and includes a full rack and data centre for the MLHU server environment. By bundling the contract for a WAN together with a data centre agreement, the need to enter into a separate contract is alleviated, making this a more cost-effective solution for MLHU.

Next Steps

Procurement and Operations will finalize contracts with start.ca (for the London offices) and Rogers (for the Strathroy office) for a three-year term.

This report prepared by the IT and Procurement and Operations teams, Healthy Organization Division.

Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health / CEO