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Item No. 7

Halifax Regional Council
September 13, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Caroline Blair-Smith, A/Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 02, 2022

SUBJECT: Supplemental Information: 311 Rural Exchange Inclusion

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Request by Regional Council on June 28, 2022.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, section 7A as follows:

The purposes of the Municipality are to

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

BACKGROUND

311 is a service governed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) as free non-emergency access to municipal services. Following a decision by the CTRC in 2004, all telecommunications service providers are required to route 311 calls to appropriate municipal services when requested by the Municipality. By November 2012, Halifax Regional Municipality had implemented the 311 service to enable its residents to 3-digit dial into the customer contact center.

It has been identified that there are phone exchanges within the HRM boundaries which are unable to connect into 311 by way of the 3-digit dial.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Regional Municipality IT staff began investigations with contracted service provider, Bell Canada, into the missing phone exchanges in question. It has been determined that the reason these exchanges were not connected to the 3-digit dial infrastructure is two-fold:

1. Some exchanges were not identified as part of the initial implementation, and
2. Some exchanges, related to the new 782 area code have been created since initial implementation.

The first step in analysis was to overlay the official HRM boundary map with Bell's telecom map to ensure all exchanges not able to connect via dialing 311 were identified. Here are the results:

Exchange Codes	Communities affected
<u>902 Area Code</u> Bell: 347	Ecum Secum
<u>782 Area Code</u> Distributel: 256 Bragg Communications Inc.: 428 Fibernetics Corporation: 925	(Part of HRM and the Municipality of St. Mary's)
<u>902 Area Code</u> Bell: 654	Port Dufferin
<u>782 Area Code</u> Distributel: 285 Bragg Communications Inc: 477 Fibernetics Corporation: 606	

The next step is to obtain agreement from the Municipality of St. Mary's to route the exchanges allocated to the community of Ecum Secum to the HRM Customer Contact Center via the 311 3-digit dial. This is required because Ecum Secum (and its exchanges) falls not only within HRM boundaries, but also within the Municipality of St. Mary's.

The final step is to execute the telecommunications infrastructure changes required to route those phone exchanges to the HRM 311 service. IT will:

1. Formally request the changes* be made to Bell, our service provider.
2. Formally request the changes* be made to all other telecommunications providers affected who own exchanges within these areas.

*This telecommunications infrastructure changes will include all land lines, and wireless towers which exist within these locations. The wireless service providers will review the wireless patterns of the towers to determine which towers are routed to 311. In other words, a wireless phone physically located within HRM, regardless of the area or exchange code associated, will automatically route to the HRM Customer Contact Center via the 3-digit 311 dial.

This is expected to be completed before October 31, 2022.

Once the technical telecommunications infrastructure work is complete, IT and the Director of Customer Contact Centers will work together to communicate the changes to residents to create awareness and share

the positive changes made to be inclusive of all who are within the boundaries of Halifax Regional Municipality to be able to access 311 services via the 3-digit dial.

Going forward, to avoid reoccurrence:

1. Bell has provided assurances that they will notify HRM IT upon creation of any new exchanges within HRM boundaries.
2. IT will execute regular audits, with Bell, of telecommunications' actions to add phone exchanges will occur in a proactive manner.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to implementing the requested changes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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