

Street sweeping contract awarded; bidder upset

By Angela Gismondi

Con-Ker Construction has been awarded a contract for street sweeping and cleaning services in the Township of King, but A&G The Road Cleaners, the Township's current service provider, is not happy with the decision.

A report from the engineering and public works department presented at the committee of the whole meeting on March 17 outlined the results of the tendering process for the Township's street sweeping and cleaning services.

Staff recommended that Con-Ker Construction be awarded the five-year contract for the spring and fall sweeping based on the fact that the company was the lowest bidder, with a total bid in the amount of \$349,500.52 (including HST), plus \$27.50 per tonne (plus HST) for disposal of materials based on an estimated quantity of 1,500 tonnes per year. That translates to \$62,947 for 2014 and \$62,383.90 per year from 2015 to 2018 which includes the cost of disposal.

Moshe Tsherna, of A&G The Road Cleaners Ltd., made a deputation to council questioning why his company was not awarded the contract even though the cost they provided for the sweeping component was the lowest. He argued his business is local, run out of Bolton, and that the Township has had no issues with the service they have provided over the years.

"We've been in business for 25 years and this is the first time I've had to come before council," said Tsherna. "I'm a little upset with purchasing. Purchasing put the sweeping and removal costs together. But if you look at just sweeping, we are cheaper. It's black and white. I feel it's not fair to combine the two."

Rob Flindall, director of operation for the Township explained that this contract is different from past contracts. The Township is planning to close the Miller Road Landfill in 2015, therefore alternate disposal arrangements are needed from 2015 to 2018 and beyond, Flindall explained. The Town asked that the disposal cost be incorporated into the bid for 2015 to 2018.

For the sweeping component for 2014 (without disposal), A&G put in a bid of \$62,153, lower than the Con-Ker bid of \$62,947.21. For the cost of street cleaning with disposal (from 2015 to 2018), A&G came in higher with a bid of \$105,373.34 compared to the Con-Ker bid of \$62,383.90.

Allan Evelyn, the Township's director of finance, said the Township clearly stated it was looking for one company to provide both services. Con-Ker offered the lowest price.

"The parties that responded understood that it was a combined commitment," he said. "They knew we weren't going to engage two service providers for doing these services."

Councillor Bill Cober was concerned that the new service provider would have some challenges.

"The one concern I have with street sweeping is that it's a short season and when we change a service provider, our staff has to provide support to that service provider, they have to babysit them," said Cober. "There is value in familiarity with our township and with our program. That's important to consider, too."

But Mayor Steve Pellegrini argued the tendering process is in place for a reason "to ensure the Township gets the lowest possible price for the service.

"I hear you but we're talking about \$53 compared to \$27.50," said Pellegrini to the deputant, noting to ignore the tendering process would be "a slippery slope."

Council passed the bylaw authorizing that the mayor and clerk execute the contract for street sweeping and cleaning with the lowest bidder, Con-Ker Construction.