



## [This is an English version of the report originally submitted in French to Verdun Borough Council on September 2, 2014]

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF MONTRÉAL

(Section 57.1.23 paragraph 4 of the Montréal's City Charter, c. C-11.4).

**TO:** Verdun Borough Council, attention:

- Mr. Jean-François Parenteau  
Mayor  
4555 Rue De Verdun  
Verdun, Quebec H4G 1M4
- Ms. Caroline Fiset  
Borough Secretary

**RE:** **Inspection report: allegation of a directed specifications document for the provision of a snow blower**

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#### 1. Background

From July 16 to August 4, 2014, the Procurement Service (Service de l'approvisionnement), at the request of the Verdun borough, conducted a call for tenders, 14-13787, for the provision of a Larue or RPM Tech snow blower.

On August 4, 2014, the Office of Inspector General (hereinafter: OIG) received a complaint to the effect that the specifications document was directed. In this context, the OIG undertook an investigation of the allegations.

#### 2. Analysis of the specifications and determination of needs

Analysis of the specifications revealed that, pursuant to articles 1.1 and 2.1 of the technical specifications provided in Section VI of the specifications, only two (2) types of equipment were acceptable.

- Article 1.1 Brand and model considered
- Larue D60
  - RPM Tech 227M
- Article 2.1 Only the snow blower brands and models indicated in paragraph 1.1 will be considered.

The technical requirements provided in the technical specifications of Section VI of the specifications were prepared by the representatives of the Verdun borough. The limited number of models accepted is intended to reduce and control the following aspects:

- the inventory of spare parts;
- the mechanics' need for training;
- the operators' need for training;
- to make the control boxes installed in the loaders compatible with the largest possible number of loader-mounted snow blower heads.

The Verdun borough currently owns Sicard, Vohl, Blanchette and Larue snow blowers.

The technical specifications were reproduced from technical specifications used in a previous call for tenders. At least one (1) error was reproduced in Article 1.2.1 and one (1) irrelevant requirement was kept in Article 8.2.1. These oversights provide evidence of a lack of thoroughness and knowledge in the preparation of the technical specifications.

### **3. Call for tenders 14-13787**

During the call for tenders period, two (2) suppliers requested changes to the specifications in order to make their products eligible. However, due to the absence of key people in the borough during the call for tenders period, the products proposed by these two (2) suppliers were not evaluated and no addendum was issued to make them eligible.

The requirement of article 8.2.1 concerning the provision of control boxes compatible with the two (2) other models covered by the call for tenders (specifications 82509A11 and 82509B11) was interpreted by one (1) supplier as directed and favourable to another supplier. This requirement was a reproduction of a requirement that appeared in specifications in 2009 and was not relevant in the case of the current call for tenders. Unfortunately, as a result of this incorrect interpretation, one (1) supplier withdrew from the call for tenders process.

Although the product proposed by the lowest bidder was not considered eligible in an addendum during the call for tenders period, the procurement service sent the technical specifications for the product proposed by the lowest bidder to the borough so that it could evaluate its compliance. The product proposed by the lowest bidder was deemed compliant with the technical requirements.

#### 4. Findings and recommendations

The investigation conducted by the Office of Inspector General revealed that:

- the technical specifications for call for tenders 14-13787 for the provision of a Larue or RPM Tech snow blower limited the market to two (2) suppliers;
- the absence of key people in the Verdun borough during the call for tenders period impeded the revision of the specifications through the issuing of the relevant addenda;
- the products of at least two (2) suppliers were not given serious consideration before the tenders were opened;
- the technical specifications contained errors that were not all corrected by means of an addendum. At least one (1) of these errors contributed to the withdrawal of a bidder who had requested the specifications from the call for tenders process.

As a result of the foregoing, the Office of Inspector General is of the opinion that the call for tenders 14-13787, calling for the provision of a Larue or RPM Tech snow blower, did not promote a competitive market.

**Given that under section 57.1.23, paragraph 4 of the Montréal's City Charter, the Inspector General may, at any time, submit any notice or recommendation he considers necessary to any decision-making authority of the city, he recommends:**

- **that the call for tenders 14-13787, calling for the provision of a Larue or RPM Tech snow blower, be cancelled and that a new call for tenders be issued;**
- **that the technical specifications be prepared by individuals who have the necessary skills to express the needs in technical terms and avoid, wherever possible, the use of brands and models in defining the required features.**

Denis Gallant, Ad. E.  
Inspector General

Date: \_\_\_\_\_