The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Corporate Services & Clerk

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Laura Moy, Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Date to Council: May 14, 2019

Report Number: CS-2019-10

Subject: Webcasting and Closed Captioning Services for Council Meetings

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That the Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules offered by eSCRIBE **be approved in principle**;

And that direction **be provided** on the single or multi-camera view;

And further that the 2019 pro-rated cost for the Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules, as well as the cost for implementation and purchase of the cameras and the 2020 annual support and maintenance **be considered** for funding from the Municipal Modernization Fund when a report is presented to Council on the proposed use of this Fund.

Background

On January 16, 2008, Administration presented a report to Council on the feasibility and costs associated with broadcasting Council meetings online through a webcasting service. At the time, Council did not proceed with webcasting services, as it was cost prohibitive, requiring a substantial investment of $75,000.00 in hardware equipment.

Currently, the Town records audio of all Council meetings through a digital recorder. These recordings assist with ensuring the accuracy, accountability and documentation of motions in Council minutes. The set-up time required for these recordings is minimal for staff prior to each meeting. These recordings are not posted on the Town's website; however, residents can obtain a copy for a nominal fee as set out in the Town's annual Fees and Charges By-law.

These audio recordings are a valuable staff resource for clarification and obtaining context on issues discussed during Council meetings.

Comments

Tecumseh Council and Committee meeting agendas have been prepared and made available to the public in an electronic format since 2002. Tecumseh was one of the first municipalities in Essex County to implement an electronic agenda.

In 2016, the Corporate Services Department implemented the eSCRIBE Agenda Management Software (eSCRIBE) to prepare and publish electronic agendas for Council and Committee Meetings. In 2018, eSCRIBE services and modules were expanded for administrative efficiencies to include electronic preparation of administrative reports and meeting minutes.

eSCRIBE also offers Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules. These Modules bolster transparency initiatives while simplifying web video workflows. The Webcasting Module provides a fully managed, end-to-end solution for capturing archival video and streaming it live online. It features unlimited storage and live streaming of audio and video. The Module can be combined with the Minute Module to automatically index the meeting's agenda and minutes for both live and archived web viewing. Automated Closed Captioning (CC) is available as an option.

Key Features of the Webcasting Module include:

- Unlimited storage and streaming of audio or video content from meetings

- Automatically detects device used to view the video stream, and loads a suitable video player

- Allows for smart (hyper) tags of video to the meeting's agenda items and minutes

- Allows users to view entire meeting or jump to specific agenda item sections with a single tap

- Access to reporting and metrics of viewership (number of viewers, etc.)

- Video feed can be provided by any video capture source, even from a cable company.

The *Municipal Act, 2001,* in Section 228(c) and (d) stipulates that the Clerk's duty is to record, without note or comment, all resolutions and decisions of Council, and to keep records of Council meetings and proceedings. The Webcasting Module is not intended to replace permanent records of Council meetings, rather it would enhance the Town's transparency and accessibility. It would also foster engagement and open communications with the public and in so doing, foster better customer service.

The video and audio recordings of Council meetings could be made available on the Town's website, alongside the agenda and minutes of each meeting.

Acquiring the Closed Captioning Module would also be necessary to meet legislated accessibility requirements.

Any webcasting service must comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005,* (AODA) Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR). The Town is required to meet WCAG 2.0 Level A standard when posting pre-recorded videos to the Town's website, as well as any commercially available web application or social media site such as YouTube or Facebook. The IASR requires designated public sector organizations to caption pre-recorded audio and video information if the content is made available through any website after January 1, 2014. This regulation is only required for post-production video and not during livestreaming of meetings. This requirement would be satisfied through eSCRIBE's Closed Captioning Module.

Closed Captioning of each video can be completed within 48 hours of each live broadcast and then uploaded to the Town's website. In addition, eSCRIBE's Closed Captioning module has the feature to provide transcripts of all recorded meetings.

An environmental scan of webcasting and video recording of Council meetings by the area municipalities of Essex County was undertaken. The findings are summarized in the table below and indicate half of the area municipalities provide webcasting and/or video recordings of their Council meetings. Only the County of Essex provides Closed Captioning with their live broadcast.

Municipality	Video	CC	Annual Cost
Town of Lakeshore	Swagit	No	$8,000.00
Town of Essex	CFTV	No	$22,000.00
Municipality of Leamington	CFTV	No	$22,000.00
County of Essex	Cogeco	Yes *	$120.00 /hour
Town of Kingsville	No	No	n/a
Town of LaSalle	No	No	n/a
Town of Amherstburg	No	No	n/a
Town of Tecumseh	No	No	n/a

*National Captioning Canada

Lakeshore has an agreement with Swagit, an American company, which provides webcasting services live and on-demand.

Both Essex and Leamington contract out their webcasting of live Council Meetings to a broadcast provider in partnership with CFTV to film their Council meetings. In Essex, CFTV provides a digital copy of the recording which is thereafter uploaded onto their YouTube channel. Leamington has CFTV upload their video to their municipal YouTube channel. In consultation with these municipalities, the process of uploading a Council meeting video is not instantaneous; rather, the process usually occurs within a few weeks or months after the meeting. Their webcast is not available in closed captioning. CFTV does not offer its services in the Tecumseh area.

The County of Essex (County) has a partnership with Cogeco to live broadcast County Council meetings on Cogeco's local community channel called YourTV Windsor (YourTV). The Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) regulates YourTV through the authority of the *Broadcasting Act, 1996.* This Federal legislation requires YourTV to provide airtime for local content as a provision to their CRTC broadcasting licence. Currently, YourTV broadcasts the City of Windsor and the County of Essex Council meetings.

The County contracts National Captioning Canada at an hourly rate of $120.00 to close caption the live broadcast. This cost is unpredictable and unquantifiable since the fee is subject to the duration of each Council meeting. Cogeco later provides a video recording of the meeting to the County, however it does not capture the closed captions.

As a result, the County has also expressed an interest in eSCRIBE's Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules.

YourTV advises there is insufficient airtime available in their regular scheduled programming to offer services to Tecumseh.

Some of the area municipalities that are eSCRIBE clients have expressed an interest in obtaining the Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules (Towns of Kingsville, Amherstburg, LaSalle and the County of Essex). At this writing, they have not yet subscribed.

In order to implement the Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules, installation of a video camera in the Council Chambers would be necessary. A single fixed camera could be installed that provides a wide shot of the Council Chambers. Although this would not provide viewers with a close-up view, it would provide viewers the convenience of watching the meeting live, or at a later time. This option is for standard broadcasting quality with minimal equipment and staff resources. An example of a single camera video recording from the Town of Newmarket can be viewed at Newmarket Council Webcast.

Alternatively, the option of a multi-camera experience could be delivered. This would require additional staff resources to manage the streaming and switching of cameras based on the discussion during the meeting. The multi-camera experience gives viewers a more effective and closer visual. This option is a more sophisticated video production. An example of a multi-camera video can be viewed on the City of Hamilton website at Hamilton Council Webcast.

Both a single camera and multi-camera webcast and video recording will require staff training and software upgrades to ensure the quality of video posted to the Town's website.

Consultations

Information & Communication Services
Financial Services
Area Municipalities

Financial Implications

Webcasting and Closed Captioning of Council meetings was not included in the 2019 Budget. Based on the quote received from eSCRIBE, the cost of these Modules for one area municipality eSCRIBE client is itemized below. These costs could be reduced by $750.00 per Module if two or more area municipalities also subscribe to the Modules:

One time costs Webcasting – 2019	Single	Multiple
Fixed single camera	$2,400.00	N/A
Multi-camera	N/A	$10,000.00
Webcasting Module Implementation	$2,025.00	$2,025.00
Webcasting Support/Maintenance*	$4,975.00	$4,975.00
Total Webcasting cost for 2019	$9,400.00	$17,000.00
One time costs Closed Captioning – 2019		
Closed Captioning Module Implementation	$2,700.00	$2,700.00
Closed Captioning Support/Maintenance*	$4,487.50	$4,487.50
Total Closed Captioning cost for 2019	$7,187.50	$7,187.50
Total Investment – 2019	**$16,587.50**	**$24,187.50**

* based on 6 months (July – December 2019)

The cost for annual support and maintenance of the Webcasting and Closed Captioning Modules from eSCRIBE would be pro-rated in 2019. For example, if implemented July 1, 2019, these costs would be $9,462.50. In addition to the support and maintenance costs in 2019, there would be the implementation fees of $4,725.00 (Webcasting $2,025.00 and Closed Captioning $2,700.00) and the cost of the camera(s).

Direction is requested from Council on a single fixed camera view or the multi-camera closer visual for the webcast and video recording.

It is recommended that consideration be given to funding both the 2019 costs and the 2020 annual support and maintenance costs of $9,950.00 for Webcasting and $8,975.00 for Closed Captioning from the one-time Municipal Modernization Fund.

A separate report will be provided on the recommended use of the Municipal Modernization Fund allocation to the Town in the amount of $620,201.00. The Province has allocated these funds to municipalities to assist them in becoming more efficient, reduce expenditure growth in the longer term, and to help modernize service delivery.

In the alternative, the 2019 costs could be funded from the One-time Lifecycle Reserve. The annual support and maintenance costs starting thereafter in 2020 would be included in the annual Corporate Services Budget under Computer Support/Software.

The foregoing costs and funding options are summarized in the following Table:

Source	2019 Single	2019 Multiple	2020	2021 and Beyond
Recommended: Municipal Modernization Fund	$16,587.50	$24,187.50	$18,925.00	$0
Alternative: One-time Life Cycle	$16,587.00	$24,287.00	$0	$0
Corporate Services – Computer Software / Support	$0	$0	$18,925.00	$18,925.00

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2017-18 Strategic Priorities
☒	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
☐	Ensure that the Town of Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
☐	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of the Town of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
☒	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
☒	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable   ☒

Website ☐   Social Media ☐   News Release ☐   Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

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Reviewed by:

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Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None