

Report to Council

Report Title: Broadcasting Council Meetings Updated Proposal

Prepared By: Fiona Hamilton, Clerk

Department: Clerk

Date: March 10, 2020

Report Number: CLK2020-08 **File Number:** C11CL

Attachments: None

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby approves Report Number CLK2020-08 – Broadcasting Council Meetings Updated Proposal, prepared by Fiona Hamilton, Clerk and in doing so approves proceeding to arrange for Council Meetings to be broadcast by Wightman as part of its residential television service.

Report:

Background:

On January 14, 2020, staff brought forward Report Number CLK2020-03, regarding the option of broadcasting Council Meetings utilizing E-scribe Software Ltd. Council defeated the resolution to accept the report, and requested that staff further investigate broadcasting options.

During the 2020 Municipal Budget deliberations, Council approved spending up to \$5,000.00 to broadcast Council Meetings.

Analysis:

Staff have consulted with two providers regarding the availability to broadcast Council Meetings at the Bruce County Council Chambers.

Option 1: Facebook Live Streaming

At the budget meeting, Council discussed a consultant that could assist in broadcasting Council meeting for a more affordable price. Staff spoke with the consultant who recommended using Facebook Live Streaming to broadcast Council Meetings. Unfortunately, there are a number of drawbacks to proceeding with this method.

The Municipality of Brockton would be restricted to broadcasting only from mobile devices if Facebook Live Streaming were to be used. The Municipality of Brockton would also need to purchase up to three (3)

additional iPhones to be placed on tripods and an iPad to video the meetings and additional microphones (while the costs of these devices vary, they would likely be approximately \$600.00 each for the iPhones and iPad), as well as an additional software charge of approximately \$700.00 annually.

Facebook Live requires videos recorded on mobile device to be no longer than four (4) hours in length. Facebook Live does not allow for content editing, since it is advertised a “live” or “spontaneous” service. Therefore, staff may be required to pause, or stop the livestream during recesses, and Closed Session. Therefore, the video will not maintain a consistent flow and may not record the entire meeting as preferred.

Since Facebook Live is a streaming service, staff would also be expected to monitor any comments being received through the meeting’s stream, and that level of interaction and engagement may not be able to be met throughout the lengthy span, and unpredictability of each meeting. As a result, additional staff may be required at each Council Meeting to monitor the streaming and to switch between the cameras depending on who is speaking, as the Clerk’s primary responsibility under s. 228(1) of *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 25 is to record resolutions, decisions and proceedings of Council. Staff time would also be required following each Council Meeting to gather insight and analytics from the video, and ensure that each video is downloaded and saved in the Municipality’s records.

Significant costs would be associated with Option 1 since staff would need to purchase additional equipment, as well as the costs associated with Facebook Live. Facebook Live costs approximately \$1.00 per minute for transcriptions, and \$1.00 per minute for Closed Captioning to comply with accessibility requirements. Since the majority of Brockton’s Council Meetings are two (2) to three (3) hours long, the approximate cost is estimated to be \$360.00 per meeting, which results in an annual charge of approximately \$7,560.00 (based on twenty-one (21) regularly scheduled Council Meetings). – These costs are only for the transcriptions and Closed Captioning features.

Option 2: Wightman Telecom Broadcasting

Staff consulted with Wightman Telecom to inquire about using their services to broadcast Council Meetings. Wightman offered to provide a broadcasting service at no cost to the Municipality. Wightman would use two cameras installed on tripods within the Bruce County Council Chambers to record the meetings. Wightman would also provide training on the software.

Wightman would provide the Municipality with a copy of the recording, as well as broadcast the Council Meeting through their residential television service on Channel 6, allowing more residents to view the meeting for accountability and transparency. This option benefits rural residents who may not have internet access, or have low-speed internet connections.

Since Wightman will provide the Municipality with a copy of the recording, staff would also be able to upload the Council Meeting recording to the Municipality’s YouTube channel. The Municipality can comply with *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11 through utilizing YouTube’s automated Closed Captioning.

With this option, the Municipality would receive a higher quality product, with greater standards incorporated as compared to a streaming software. Wightman would have the ability to edit the content, including the ability to adjust the camera angles, which would not be available using Option 1.

Wightman also provides the same service to the Municipality of West Grey.

However, as some meetings between municipalities may conflict, representatives from Wightman have inquired about the possibility of having camera equipment installed within the walls of the Bruce County Council Chambers to ensure that every Council Meeting can be broadcasted in case of absence by Wightman staff. This equipment would be purchased by Wightman at no cost the Municipality. However, the Municipality would need to proceed with approval from the County of Bruce if Council was in support of this option.

Staff are recommending that Council approve Option 2 to broadcasting Council Meetings through Wightman Telecom to provide a high quality, and local service to all Brockton residents. This Option has no effect on the 2020 Municipal Budget.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? | N/A |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

If Council proceeded with broadcasting meetings through Wightman Telecom there would be zero cost.

There is approximately \$10,390.00 (\$7,540.00 for transcribing and closed captioning and approximately \$2850.00 for equipment) with Option 1.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Fiona Hamilton', written in a cursive style.

Fiona Hamilton, Clerk

Reviewed By:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Sonya Watson', written in a cursive style.

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer