

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Closed Captioning – Council Technology Upgrade (Live-Streaming/Council Meetings)

Date Prepared: October 23, 2019

Report To: Inclusion Advisory Committee

Councillor and Role: Deanne Stapleton, Lead

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

Seeking input on the automated Closed Captioning functionality of the upgrade to the technology in the Council Chamber that includes live-streaming.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Council approved an upgrade to the technology used within the Council Chamber in April, 2018. The project was conducted in a three-phase approach:

1. Phase 1 - assessment of the existing technology Infrastructure
2. Phase 2 - procurement and install of the required equipment
3. Phase 3 – agenda/meeting management software with web streaming capabilities

The City is currently in Phase 3 and are diligently working to finalize all aspects of the web streaming to provide broader and improved access for the public to the Regular Meeting of Council and its Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting. The improvements include:

- 1) Upgraded assistive hearing devices (4 units) for hard of hearing individuals who are attending the Council meeting in person.
- 2) The installation of two large displays within the Council Chambers for the presentation of Council agenda and meeting items.
- 3) Live web streaming of the Regular Council Meeting and the Committee of the Whole on the City website. As well, Regular Council Meetings and COTW meetings once complete, will be archived on the City web site for on-demand viewing. While Rogers have conducted broadcasts of City Regular Council Meetings on their community channel, now the webcast and recording of City Council Meetings will be available to anyone with an internet connection.
- 4) The City is also exploring the use of an automated Closed Captioning (CC) service to provide “real time” transcription during Regular Council Meetings. As this real time automated functionality is relatively new technology for meeting transcription services, the City project team is currently conducting an evaluation to determine whether the City will retain this functionality.

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As regards to the Closed Captioning functionality referred to in Item # 4, from the project team's limited review of this service to date, we have identified deficiencies in accuracy of transcribed text. However, the members of the City project team have no subject matter expertise with Closed Captioning to allow for a proper evaluation.

As such, the City project team is seeking the expertise of the City Inclusion Advisory Committee to assist in evaluating the automated Closed Captioning service as to whether there is value in retaining this service. As we are currently in a trial period for the automated Closed Captioning service, if members of the Committee have availability in the next few weeks to review this service, it would be greatly appreciated as the City would then be in a better position to conduct a more thorough assessment of this service.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:
 - Included in cost of upgrade – budget approved
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
 - City Residents
 - All groups represented on the Inclusion Advisory Committee and any others deemed appropriate by members of the Inclusion Advisory Committee
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: N/A
4. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: N/A
7. Human Resource Implications: N/A
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications:
 - Support for technology

10. Other Implications: N/A

Recommendation:

That the Committee review the automated Closed Captioning functionality of the upgrade to the technology in the Council Chamber that includes live-streaming and provide feedback on its effectiveness.

Prepared/Approved by: Elaine Henley, City Clerk

Attachments: N/A