

# Town of Riverview

## COUNCIL REPORT FORM



Presented to: **Riverview Town Council**

Department: **Civic Engagement Committee**

Date: **November 14, 2017**

Subject: **Live Streaming Proposal**

**Agenda Item:** 5a

**Meeting Date:** RCM 11/14/2017

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### **BACKGROUND**

In the spring of 2016, the Civic Engagement Committee was formed and tasked with bringing forward a proposal on live streaming Riverview Town Council meetings. This is a common request by residents and aligns with Council's desire to increase transparency around decision-making and communicate the town's business to all of its stakeholders in a convenient and accessible way.

During the 2017 budget deliberations, the Civic Engagement Committee proposed that \$38,000 be included in the capital budget to fund the purchase of necessary equipment and software to facilitate the live streaming of Council meetings and potentially other events held in Council Chambers. At that time, Council requested further information on the project before consideration for approval would be given and the item was tabled.

The committee was asked to research other communities who offer live streaming and determine how effective the service is and what options exist. The committee conducted surveys of other communities using live streaming services across Canada and the results are summarized below.

### **Live Streaming**

The Civic Engagement Committee surveyed the following communities:

- Langley, BC
- Resort Municipality of Whistler, BC
- Airdrie, AB
- Cape Breton, NS
- Grande Prairie, AB
- Burlington, ON
- Elliot Lake, ON
- Truro, NS

We asked the following questions:

- 1) *Which company do you use for live streaming/recording your meetings?*
- 2) *How did you decide on your provider?*
- 3) *What video equipment do you use? How many cameras? Who operates them?*
- 4) *Does your system integrate with any other software? I.e. Agenda management?*

- 5) *Why did you decide to live stream?*
- 6) *Can you track viewers? If so, how many viewers watch live/recorded?*
- 7) *What do you perceive as benefits? Are you happy with your decision?*
- 8) *Do you use your system for anything other than recording Council meetings?*
- 9) *What was the approximate cost of your system? Your annual costs?*

All municipalities found value in the service. They varied in terms of investment, staffing resources, visual quality of the broadcast, accessibility across platforms, and in viewership. Despite the differences, each municipality counts its live streaming service among the most effective tools to engage citizens in the democratic process.

The municipalities relied on a variety of equipment arrangements: one used YouTube as a free resource for hosting videos, and the equipment used in each community ranged from one to four cameras in Council Chambers.

Few communities used the system to broadcast things other than Council meetings but one community found a way to generate revenue by using the system for a local film festival.

### **Viewership**

Some communities had low viewership at around 10 people per video and others, like Truro (pop. 12,261) saw viewership in the range of 100-300 per video. Viewership was always lower during the live meeting than it was in reviewing the archived broadcast. Airdrie had about 10 people viewing live and 500-600 viewing after the fact. It was also noted that in many communities the videos were a helpful resource for staff and Council afterwards.

### **Service Providers**

There were a wide range of service providers but the most popular was ISI/eScribe. We believe that many other service providers would be compatible with eScribe and not just ISI, but they are the ones that eScribe typically outsources to.

Slick	1
Neulion	1
ISI Live/eScribe	3
Netromedia	1
Swaggit	1
LiveStream.com	1

### **Cost**

Cost ranged from about \$8,600 to \$250,000. Based on our needs, quotes from Ivan's camera, research from the aforementioned communities and on scaling back the original plan, our committee recommends we budget \$28,000. This includes a two camera system, plus the encoder, switcher, system monitor and controllers for the video system and a large TV monitor and installation for Council chambers (the existing projection screen would need to be removed as it would block the camera shot). This cost would total \$20,000. The remaining \$8,000 is an annual cost from eScribe to have the video integrated into the agenda management software and hosted on its server. This integration would allow viewers to go back into meetings and click on certain agenda items to watch only that portion of the video, rather than the entire meeting.

The Town would also need someone to operate the system, relying on a current staff to assume this responsibility or through partnerships such as one with the AV students at RHS. The committee is not including a cost for a paid employee/overtime to operate this system.

### **Process**

It is important to note that even if Council approves the inclusion of the line item in the capital and operating budget, the Town will still go through the RFP process in 2018. Council will still have an opportunity to review whether or not the money is to be spent and can refine details if need be. The hardware portion of \$20,000 will be included in the capital budget while the \$8,000 for eScribe would be included in the operating budget.

### **CONSIDERATIONS** n/a

Legal: n/a

Financial: \$28,000 cost included in 2018 budget

Policy: n/a

Stakeholders: Council, staff, residents

Interdepartmental Consultation: n/a

### **OPTIONS** n/a

### **RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMITTEE:**

We are bringing forward a cost of **\$28,000** to be included in the 2018 budget for live streaming. This is a \$10,000 reduction from last year's figure. There is **no recommendation for Council to approve this evening** as deliberation will take place during the budget presentation. At that time Council can decide whether this item is to be included in the 2018 budget.

**Prepared by:** Andrew J. LeBlanc, on behalf of the Civic Engagement Committee

**CAO Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_