

<b>To:</b>	Warden Halliday and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	October 11, 2018
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	CAOR-CW-21-18
<b>Title:</b>	Council Video Recording Improvements
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Rob Hatten
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	None
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation lost as per Resolution CW241-18; Endorsed by County Council on October 25, 2018 as per Resolution CC105-18.

## Recommendation

1. That staff include \$30,000 in the 2019 budget for the procurement of video and audio recording solutions for Council and Committee of the Whole meetings.

## Executive Summary

Grey County has been recording County Council and Committee of the Whole meetings since April 2018. Viewership is increasing over time; however viewers are only watching small portions of the video. Overall, the recordings are of a low quality and significant improvements could be made with a moderate investment. Improving the quality of our recordings will support the County's commitment to excellence in governance and service and will help grow our audience.

## Background and Discussion

County staff began recording Council and Committee of the Whole meetings in the spring of 2018. Following Council's direction to test a proof of concept, little has been invested in the recordings which require a 1080p webcam and digital recording software.

A webcam mounted on the wall captures video while a cable connects the recording laptop to the Council Chamber sound system which records the microphones in the room.

Overall, quality of the videos is low. The webcam records in high definition but isn't designed to capture the large room in detail. Audio is inconsistent as it varies based on each speaker's proximity to their microphone. This low quality comes at a very low cost, but it has a direct impact on viewership.

## Our Current Process

The Grey County Communications Manager records meetings with occasional back up from other staff. Recordings need to be turned on and off and all slides projected onto the main screens of the Council Chamber need to be manually imported into the video and transitioned along with the live presentation.

Following the meeting, recordings are uploaded to the Grey County YouTube channel, typically the same day as the meeting depending on file size. The Communications Manager time stamps direct discussions from the agenda and links them in the video description to make it easier for viewers to jump to specific discussions of interest.

Within 24 hours the YouTube auto captions are applied to the video. These captions are passable but risky as misinterpretations could range from inconsequential to embarrassing or offensive.

### Pros of the current system

- Affordable
- Captures audio and video
- YouTube is a free, publicly accessible platform

### Cons of the current system

- Poor video quality and subpar audio make videos difficult to watch
- Time consuming and distracting for staff to produce.
- Difficult to identify speakers could be considered poor transparency
- Insufficient equipment
- Errors in captions make them difficult to follow
- Recordings aren't tied to an agenda

## Recording Analytics

### Council meeting

Average views per video: 20 (max 26 on May 10)

Average length of video: 42:00

Average length of view: 3:15

### Committee of the Whole meeting

Average views per video: 122 (max 500 on June 28)

Average length of video: 128 minutes

Average length of view: 2:00 minutes

Engagement on post has been virtually non-existent, with no relevant comments and few “likes” or “dislikes” of videos.

## What this tells us

People are watching. We can't tell specifically who (public, staff, media), but it appears many people are interested in viewing discussions of interest to them. Viewers are not watching the whole meeting.

## What are others doing?

Most Ontario municipalities who are recording meetings are using services that integrate live streaming and recording with agenda management. There are multiple service providers who each offer a range of services. For example, Civic Web provides a complete web portal for managing agendas, minutes, videos and live streams. Other services, like Sliq, have the ability to timecode in detail every time an individual speaks making it is easy for viewers to sort by both agenda topics and by speakers.

There are multiple other services providers in the market, including other solutions that maybe found locally, and each have their individual pros and cons.

## Recommended next steps

Grey County can make council recordings more attractive and retain viewers for longer by following the example of other municipalities and contracting an appropriate service. Staff recommend an RFP be issued outlining our specific needs for our recording services. Some of the deliverables to be included on the RFP are:

- Live streaming
- Full HD video from multiple angles (capturing at a minimum, all councillors, the podium and the front dais)
- Ability to display the live council TV monitors in recordings
- Ability to identify speakers
- Captioning to meet AODA requirements
- Videos hosted on an external server with full back up capabilities
- Other requirements as recommended by staff in IT and Communications

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

There is no legal requirement to video record council meetings.

## Financial and Resource Implications

Staff are recommending Council consider \$30,000 in the 2019 budget. Up to \$15,000 of these funds could be realized through the projected surplus in the 2018 Communications budget.

If an appropriate solution can be procured, there will be recurring annual costs for services or licensing.

The recommended funding also comprises investments in improving the sound system in the Council Chambers, including funding for an assisted listening system to improve accessibility.

The assisted listening system costs maybe be revered through an Enabling Accessibility Grant application submitted earlier this year.

## Relevant Consultation

Communication Staff, IT Staff,

Multiple vendors

## Appendices and Attachments

*none*