



BOARD REPORT

TO: Chair and Directors

File No: 0550 01

SUBJECT: Video Recording/Streaming of Board Meetings

DESCRIPTION: Report from Brad Payne, Manager, IT/GIS Services, dated August 1, 2019.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: the Board endorse the staff recommendation to not proceed with recording of, or live-streaming Board meetings at this time, this 15th day of August, 2019.

SHORT SUMMARY:

At the May 16, 2019 regular Board meeting, the Board received a request from a member of the public/media requesting the Board consider video recording or live-streaming the CSRD Board meetings. The Board directed staff to explore the feasibility of broadcasting/streaming the content of the monthly Board meetings.

Staff have explored options available for this process, have researched what other local governments are doing in this regard, and have done a quick study of anticipated costs. Staff are recommending the initiative not be pursued at this time.

VOTING: Unweighted Corporate LGA Part 14 (Unweighted) Weighted Corporate Stakeholder (*Weighted*)

BACKGROUND:

Attached to the Board report is a summary of other local governments that are providing broadcasting or live-streaming. The findings include that of the 27 regional districts in BC: only five (5) are streaming or recording video footage of Board meetings (Capital, Comox Valley, Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver) and two (2) are publishing audio recordings of Board meetings (Central Okanagan and Sunshine Coast).

Of the municipalities geographically located near the CSRD, four are broadcasting video and one has looked into it:

- City of Salmon Arm is publishing recordings after the meeting to YouTube.
- City of Revelstoke is utilizing a YouTube/iCompass integration to showcase live video stream and video recordings alongside their agendas.
- City of Kamloops live-streams and publishes video of council meetings using software that stores data on Canadian servers.
- City of Vernon live-streams and publishes video of council meetings using a software company based out of Canada.
- District of Sicamous explored the possibility of using the iCompass/YouTube integration but decided not to cast meetings because the District determined that the acoustics of the council chambers would need to be improved and because staff were concerned about hosting data in the USA.

CSRD staff have a number of concerns about providing broadcasting or live streaming. These concerns include hosting data outside of Canada. While filming in any public place (or in any private place to which the public is admitted) is permitted by law and publishing those films is also permitted, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of BC emphasizes the requirement for personal information¹ in the custody and control of a public body to be stored within Canada. It is unclear to staff, from a legal perspective, whether the public nature of CSRD Board meetings would allow the CSRD to store video (if it showed identifiable members of the public) outside of Canada. YouTube's servers are located in the United States. If the Board is interested in an option for casting or recording Board meetings in a manner where personal information is retained outside of Canada, staff would recommend that the CSRD pursue legal advice before implementing such an option.

Staff also obtained other information from a number of other local governments, including the City of Nanaimo. The City of Nanaimo utilizes the eSCRIBE video manager to broadcast council meetings and recently discussed the option of video recording public hearings ([May 27, 2019 agenda](#), item 10). The council decided not to expand the video broadcasting to public hearings as there were concerns that recording public hearings could inadvertently dissuade those who are hesitant to speak from sharing their views. While this is different than casting Board meetings, the City of Nanaimo serves as a good example, not only because it utilizes the same meeting management software as the CSRD, but because it has been casting for a number of years and has dealt with issues such as imminent elections and so on. City of Nanaimo's past practice (before 2018)² was to have a "blackout" period before elections where video is still recorded but withheld until after the election.

In staff's research of recording board and council meetings, it is apparent that viewership numbers increase on items that are of interest to the community. In an effort to improve access to the public for particular items on an agenda, many local governments that choose the route of recording board and council meetings have opted for software that allows for bookmarking and tagging of video. Where a video contains bookmarks, the public can see an outline of the agenda and click on an item to view the corresponding section of the video associated with the agenda item. This option saves the public time and frustration of clicking through a video to find the item they are interested in. By using eSCRIBE to record Board meetings, which would store video on servers in Canada, and allow for integration with our meeting management software as well as include bookmarking to allow for easy navigation. The cost for this option would approximately be an additional \$10,000/year for the bookmarking feature.

In staff discussions with other local governments, it has been noted that meeting times increased by over one hour once the video system was put in place. There are also potential ramifications from video being taken out of context or used to deliberately embarrass a Director or staff member.

Staff would also need to assess the current audio and visual equipment quality for recording/streaming purposes. The current audio and visual equipment that have been installed in the Board meeting room for teleconferencing was \$45,000 but it was not anticipated that the equipment would be used for recording or live-streaming purposes. Other jurisdictions have indicated set up costs range from \$70,000 to \$110,000.

Finally, other considerations include staff capacity. Current staff do not have the capacity to operate the equipment, edit the recordings, ensure compliance with legislation and develop appropriate policies.

¹ Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of BC indicates that "personal information" means recorded information about an identifiable individual other than contact information;

² For more information, [see news article re: reversal of past practice in 2018](#). The discussion of Council is also available via [video footage of the September 17, 2018 Council meeting](#) and in the [minutes](#).

POLICY:

Currently there is no policy regarding Board meeting electronic recording.

FINANCIAL:

This initiative is not within the current Five Year financial plan and has not been identified as a priority through the Board's strategic planning, therefore the full extent of costs has not been definitively quantified.

KEY ISSUES/CONCEPTS:

Directors need to be mindful that the decision to implement video is one which varies widely across local governments. Accessibility and transparency are the most cited reasons for adding and maintaining video, even in cases where viewership is very low compared to the costs of the service.

This is a complex initiative with many components to consider. Staff is recommending that the recording and/or live-streaming of Board meetings not be pursued at this time based on the following reasons:

1. Lack of public demand. There has only been one written request received in the last ten years.
2. While not fully quantified, the resources required (monetary and staff capacity) do not justify the overall expense of this initiative.
3. This initiative was not identified as a priority in the strategic plan.
4. There is currently no mandate for local government to display video of board meetings.

BOARD'S OPTIONS:

1. *Endorse the recommendation.*
2. *Deny the recommendation.*
3. *Defer.*
4. *Any other action deemed appropriate by the Board.*

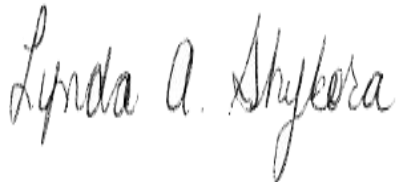
Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2019-07-18_Board_IT_BoardMeetingStreaming-Video.docx
Attachments:	- Board Casting-Recording Research - Other LGs.pdf - Average Board Meeting Duration.pdf - Board Casting - Nanaimo eSCRIBE Video.png
Final Approval Date:	Aug 2, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Jodi Pierce - Aug 2, 2019 - 8:14 AM



Lynda Shykora - Aug 2, 2019 - 11:11 AM

No Signature - Task assigned to Charles Hamilton was completed by assistant Lynda Shykora

Charles Hamilton - Aug 2, 2019 - 11:13 AM