# REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

# STAFF REPORT

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| **TO:** | Committee of the Whole | **MEETING:** | May 14, 2019 |
| **FROM:** | Gary Jurasek<br>Manager of IT & GIS | **FILE:** | 1400-20 |

**SUBJECT:** Regional District of Nanaimo Board Live Web Streaming Review

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Board web cast Committee of the Whole and Board meetings for a capital cost of $5,000 plus an annual ongoing cost of $19,900 per year for streaming and closed captioning services; and further, that staff be directed to track viewership and feedback and report back to the Board in December 2019 to ensure that there is a cost-benefit review of the provision of additional service to the public.

## SUMMARY

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board has been exploring avenues to better engage and communicate with the residents and customers within the District.

There are two new components that need to be in place to stream Board meetings to the public over the internet. The first component is video capture, and the second is a video streaming service.

## BACKGROUND

On March 26, 2019 the Board passed a resolution stating that: "*staff be directed to prepare a report on the cost of implementing the webcasting of Committee of the Whole and Board meetings; and also the cost of implementing the webcasting of all public meetings in the Board Chambers*."

Video Capture

Due to physical challenges and the seating arrangement in the current RDN Board Meeting Room, a high-quality, wide-angle, low-light sensitive camera is required to capture a quality video stream. In testing, a Sony SNC-VM772R has proven to meet the requirements of capturing a fixed full room view at a level of quality acceptable for streaming.

Live Video Streaming

EScribe is a common platform that local governments utilize to manage agendas, minutes, and motions. EScribe is used to manage RDN Board meetings and is also used by the City of Nanaimo. Feedback on eScribe has been positive and the administrators are familiar and comfortable with the service. The eScribe platform offers additional functionality to also stream video and provide closed captioning. As eScribe is integral to creating agendas, integrating a video stream would offer a consistent user experience and provide easier management.

The RDN has three potential options for streaming video, but only the first one is capable of closed captioning.

Streaming Option 1 - Stream Via eScribe

This would deliver live (latency under 5 seconds) video streaming and close captioning that is integrated with the agenda and minutes. This investment in hardware and services would remain useable if there were future upgrades to the technology in the Board Meeting room.  This solution would also require the least amount of user intervention on an ongoing basis.

**Risk**

- Has the highest cost

**Opportunities**

- Integrates with the eScribe platform and agenda
- Easy to operate and with a minimal learning curve
- Only solution capable of closed captioning
- Consistent with the City of Nanaimo

Streaming Option 2 - Stream Via Social Media

This solution offers a minimalistic approach to the streaming of the meetings.  There are various existing technologies that could be utilized.  Possible solutions include Facebook Live and YouTube. Video could be streamed from video cameras with minimal financial investment but would not be integrated into the eScribe agenda and would not offer closed captioning

**Risks**

- Does not offer closed captioning
- Has commercial advertising and generally considered unprofessional
- User experience may suffer (ie. potential for ads, account registration, etc.)
- Archival and management of videos may be challenging
- Does not integrate with the eScribe platform and agenda
- Will require intervention to post and manage videos

**Opportunity**

- Lowest cost

Streaming Option 3 – Stream Via the RDN Website

Streaming from the corporate website would offer a more professional look than social media but would require development of a streaming platform.  There would also be a requirement to administer the feeds. After the initial setup work and templates were developed, the ongoing administration would be minimal.

**Risks**

- The solution does not offer closed captioning
- There may be increased streaming costs incurred from the vendor
- There would be a requirement for RDN staff to post the videos and links
- Would require website updates and vendor cooperation as the website is hosted
- This solution does not integrate with the eScribe platform and agenda

**Opportunity**

- Low cost once the service was in place

Future Enhancements

This proposal aimed to minimize additional demands on RDN staff and to keep capital costs low. The service should deliver an acceptable user experience but could be enhanced further.

An example of a fixed view from a potential camera is below.



*Sony camera model SNC-VM772R*

If in the future the RDN Board wished to enhance the video capture technology with additional features, the proposed system could be augmented. Such features as scrolling banner messages, multiple camera views, zooming or split screen views with the agenda, camera view, and computer presentation, are possible. These enhancements would require an increase in funding to both capital and operating.

Streaming Option 1 provides an integrated agenda, video stream and is the only solution to offer closed captioning. Implementing this option can be done with minimal operational impact to the Board Meeting room and offers a solution that integrates closely with the existing eScribe agenda management system. This option also provides consistency to viewers that may be watching City of Nanaimo and RDN video streams. Additionally, this option can remain in use if significant changes are made to the physical layout of the Board Meeting room in the future.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total first year cost of the proposed Option 1 would be $24,900. This includes $19,900 for services and $5,000 to have a quality camera installed and integrated into eScribe. All of these costs are in the 2019 Financial Plan. In addition, there will be an ongoing operating cost of $19,900 per year for the streaming and closed captioning services which will be added to the 5-year Financial Plan should it continue beyond 2019.

| Initial Capital Costs | | | | Yearly Operating Costs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hardware | Labour | | Video Streaming Service | $10,450.00 |
| Camera | $3,000.00 | $2,000.00 | | Closed Captioning Service | $9,450.00 |
| **Total Initial Costs** | **$5,000.00** | | | **Total Annual Operating Costs** | **$19,900.00** |

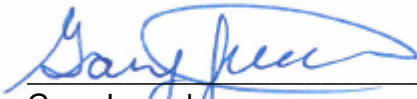*Labour and hardware costs are based on previous installations and discussions with vendors.*

With regard to the staff time for the Information Technology (IT) support at present, IT staff are supporting the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC), Committee of the Whole (COW) and Board Meetings, which each happen once per month. The amount of time spent varies at each of these meetings, and the hourly cost of the IT support based on 2019 rates is approximately $47 per hour at regular time including wages and benefits. The Board Meetings require overtime premiums at time and a half which is $70 per hour. Typically, IT staff spend about 2 hours each for EASC/COW and Board Meetings for a total staff cost of $234 per month. Any expansion of these services beyond EASC, COW and Board Meetings will need to be costed accordingly and incorporated into our budget, including the addition of travel time and associated expenses for any additional off-site meetings.

The RDN will also live stream the new Oceanside Services Committee meetings, which is an additional $750 for staffing for 2019 as we have three meetings at an estimated cost of $250 per meeting for IT staff time estimated at 4 hours plus expenses. Because of the off-site location for these meetings, these three meetings are being done outside of this proposal and will be utilizing different technology. The capital cost of the off-site meetings will be $2,000 for a portable camera and streaming device.

At this time, it is proposed that the live streaming being with the above-noted meetings in 2019 and if successful, build the staffing/operating and capital budgets to expand this service for 2020 and beyond should the level of use warrant the increase.

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Focus On Relationships- We Will Focus On Improved Two-Way Communication Within The Regional District And With Our Communities

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Reviewed by:
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