

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent

Finance, Budget and Information Technology Services

Information Technology Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Catherine Fitzgerald
Manager, Information Services

Date: December 12, 2017

Subject: Notice of Motion – Council Meeting Live Streaming

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. A one year (25 meeting) pilot project of Option 4: Live Streaming of Council Meetings with YourTV (formerly CogecoTV) be initiated on March 19, 2018.
2. Administration continue to partner with YourTV with regard to posting Council meetings following a 48 hour time period to be hosted on the YourTV website and linked to the Chatham-Kent portal.
3. Due to a recent upgrade to the YourTV website, archived Council videos be captioned when published 48 hours after the event. Costs of captioning the video would be included in the pilot.
4. A maximum of \$25,000 be available for this pilot project from the Strategic Development Reserve for the YourTV per meeting fee and captioning of the videos.
5. The results of the pilot, including specific information on staffing and equipment requirements to sustain the system as well as statistics on usage of the new service, be presented to Council in December 2018 in preparation for the 2019 budget process.

Background

On May 8, 2017 Council passed the following motion:

“To direct administration to bring a report back to Council by June 5, 2017 meeting on the logistics of live streaming the Council Meetings for the viewing ability of the residents of Chatham-Kent whom do not have the ability to access the Cogeco airings.”

Live audio streaming of Council Meetings has been available on the Chatham-Kent Municipal website since Council’s approval on September 24, 2007. Until recently, each

Council Meeting audio stream was made available on the Municipal website until being overwritten by the audio stream for the subsequent Council Meeting. As indicated in the Information Report [Video Streaming of Council Sessions](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2011/Documents/October/Oct%2024%2015e.pdf) (<http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2011/Documents/October/Oct%2024%2015e.pdf>) received by Council on October 24, 2011, usage of the audio streaming service is relatively low. Since 2015, usage of the audio streaming service has peaked at nine concurrent listeners.

When the Municipal website was upgraded in November 2017, the audio streaming service became subject to the captioning requirement of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). Due to the captioning requirement for recorded audio, only the live audio stream is now available through the website.

Since 2011, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent has a partnership with YourTV (formerly CogecoTV) for the publishing of the Council Meeting television show to the [YourTV website](https://www.yourtv.tv/node/47946) (<https://www.yourtv.tv/node/47946>). YourTV has also broadcast several of the Community Development Forums. The Municipality of Chatham-Kent does not own the video equipment currently on site in council chambers and does not have ownership of the video feed that is produced at Council Meetings. As indicated in the [October 24, 2011 Information Report](#) also linked above, YourTV has invested in the equipment and staff to televise Chatham-Kent Council Meetings to YourTV customers. YourTV has indicated that this local television feature is an added value provided to their subscribers in a very competitive market. The Municipality of Chatham-Kent records the YourTV feed and publishes the video to YourTV. YourTV has been publishing the Council Meeting television show to their website 48 hours after the live broadcast.

The 2017 Draft Budget Presentation was presented on Facebook Live on January 18, 2017. A third party organization provided the equipment and production services for this broadcast. The one-time cost to produce this event was approximately \$850.00.

On June 5, 2017 a report was submitted to Council regarding [Council Meeting Live Streaming](http://portal.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2017/Documents/June/Jun-5-16a.pdf) (<http://portal.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2017/Documents/June/Jun-5-16a.pdf>). Council directed administration to further investigate an Expression of Interest with YourTV.

YourTV has responded to the Expression of Interest and has provided a cost per Council meeting to stream Council Meetings live to the internet in addition to the existing agreement to publish the meetings 48 hours after the live broadcast.

In this time, YourTV has also upgraded their website and changed the method of publishing the archived council recordings online. This has changed the captioning requirement for these videos.

Comments

There are several options and considerations for live web streaming of Council Meetings. With the recent technology upgrades to council chambers, the Municipality is well positioned to provide live audio with a synchronized feed of the presentations from

the podium. Municipal video equipment within council chambers was not implemented with the recent technology upgrade and additional equipment and resources may be required if this is the direction of Council.

There are many areas of Chatham-Kent that are underserved in terms of high-speed internet access. As indicated in the Information Report [RTC 17-02 High-Speed Internet Connectivity](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2017/Documents/March/Mar-20-10a11.pdf) (<http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2017/Documents/March/Mar-20-10a11.pdf>) submitted to Council on March 20, 2017, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Entegrus Inc. and additional partners are working on an initiative to expand our community's access to high-speed fibre optic cable. In configuring audio and/or video web streaming, the Municipality would consider options that minimize the bandwidth required to reasonably listen and/or view the meetings. Online streaming services such as YouTube, Facebook Live, Vimeo, Azure, etc., auto-adjust video quality for the users based on their current internet connection speed.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) requires designated public sector organizations to caption prerecorded audio and video information if the content is made available through any new website created after January 1, 2014. This also applies to social media sites where the content is within the control of the Municipality. Captioning of live web streaming of audio or video content is not a requirement of the IASR for the Municipality at this time.

Option 1: Audio/Podium Streaming Option

The existing audio streaming service available through the Municipal website is being considered for an upgrade due to changing browser requirements, the availability of streaming technology and recent audio equipment upgrades. Many browsers are incompatible with the existing audio-only feed. The recent Council equipment upgrade enables the streaming of audio with a synchronized feed of the information displayed from the podium in council chambers. This option would require staff to start / stop and manage the audio/podium feed, however this is consistent with the effort for the existing audio streaming process and would not require additional staff resources. Commercially available live web streaming services such as YouTube would be used by the Municipality for publishing the content.

While this option does not have additional costs to the Municipality, it may not provide the type of experience that citizens expect. It would not be easy to determine who is speaking and it may be challenging for some viewers to follow the audio only, especially when no relevant information is being displayed through the podium during public deputations or when Councillors are asking questions of presenters. Many Ontario municipalities provide at least a fixed camera view of the council chambers and some provide dynamic perspectives based on the specific person speaking at the meeting.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) requires the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to meet the WCAG 2.0 Level A standard on all websites created or significantly upgraded since 2014. As a result of the technical upgrade to the Municipal

website in November 2017, the Municipality would be required to meet the WCAG 2.0 Level A standard when publishing prerecorded content to the Municipal website as well as to any commercially available web application or social media site such as YouTube or Facebook.

Some commercially available web applications offer automated captioning services. These automated services do not provide service level guarantees in terms of the length of time between the publishing of content and the creation of caption information. Testing of automated captioning tools has demonstrated that the automated captioning of longer videos with multiple voices is not consistent. The Municipality would not reliably meet the IASR using automated captioning tools.

Estimates for captioning services of prerecorded audio/video content vary, however some municipalities consulted retain professional services under contract for approximately \$150/hour. With approximately 25 annual Council Meetings and forums, typically between 2 and 3 hours in length, the estimated cost for captioning of prerecorded audio/video content would be between \$7,500 and \$11,250 annually. Equipment, testing and setup costs may be required for the captioning service, estimated at approximately \$2,500 plus \$250 annual lifecycle. The captions could be created during the 48 hour gap between the live broadcast and the publishing of the video to the website.

If the Municipality were to produce this broadcast of audio and synchronized podium video in a live format only, captioning would not be required.

The Municipality could investigate supplementing this option with the existing partnership with YourTV for publishing the YourTV Council Meeting television show to the internet 48 hours after the event. Captioning is required for the publishing 48 hours after the event and this cost would be in addition to Option 1.

Option 2: Audio/Podium with Fixed Camera Option

In addition to the audio streaming with synchronized video feed from the podium, the Municipality could invest in a single fixed camera in council chambers for broadcasting a simple overview video feed of Council Meetings. [The City of North Bay](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/city-of-north-bay-council) (<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/city-of-north-bay-council>) is an example of a single fixed camera implementation (without integrated podium).

This option would require additional staff resources to manage the streaming and switching between the fixed camera and the podium feed (for on screen presentations) based on the activity within the Council Meeting. Considering the size of Chatham-Kent's council chambers, this option may not provide viewers with facial views of Council members or the ability to distinguish who is speaking. There would also be no ability to focus on individual Council members as they speak. Although considerably less investment, this option is not as popular as a multi-camera experience.

This option would also require the purchase of a fixed camera and connection to the existing equipment in council chambers for approximately \$5,000 one-time plus \$1000

annual lifecycle. For a pilot, operation of this equipment could be managed by the existing Council support team. Staffing requirements to sustain this option would be assessed.

Captioning costs would apply to this option if the video is made available after the live event.

Option 3: Third Party Video Production

There is a wide range of third party video services available and prices vary based on the amount of production required for the broadcast. Services range from simple implementations involving fixed cameras, to fully staffed dynamic production services.

[The City of Sarnia \(http://csg001-harm01.canadacentral.cloudapp.azure.com/00291/Harmony/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20170321/-1/3022?viewMode=2#agenda\)](http://csg001-harm01.canadacentral.cloudapp.azure.com/00291/Harmony/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20170321/-1/3022?viewMode=2#agenda) is an example of a third party video production implementation with multiple cameras and production to ensure appropriate zoom level and angle.

Leveraging experienced external production teams would reduce or eliminate demands on municipal administrative and technical teams to support the broadcast. Upon direction of Council on the type of video experience required, administration could obtain quotes from service providers for an appropriate live video streaming service.

Captioning costs would apply to this option if the video is made available after the live event.

Option 4: Extending the Partnership with YourTV

YourTV currently broadcasts live and recorded Council Meetings to its YourTV local television station. In addition, YourTV posts the Council Meeting recording to the YourTV website 48 hours after the live event.

Several municipalities provide some form of streaming of their Council Meetings to the web while a cable provider also broadcasts the meeting to their subscribers. This includes the City of Sarnia, Town of Lakeshore, City of North Bay, City of Kitchener, City of St. Catharines, City of Kingston and the City of Peterborough.

Upon direction of Council, administration has investigated extending the partnership services of YourTV to include live web streaming. YourTV has indicated that they would be willing to provide streaming of Chatham-Kent Regular Agenda Council Meetings (including preceding Planning Meetings). This would include full multi-camera live coverage with graphics and incorporating the council audio feed as currently seen on TV. YourTV would provide the required internet connection, and all hardware and software required to digitize and upload the live video and audio. YourTV would stream the content live through a dedicated YourTV Livestream account and would also provide live monitoring of the online video stream.

YourTV would provide the video archiving, closed captioning or copies of coverage service for \$500 per streamed meetings. The Municipality would provide a logo'd link from the Municipality of Chatham-Kent web site directing users to the YourTV council coverage site.

Not included in the YourTV offer is video archiving, closed captioning or copies of coverage.

Due to the recent changes in how YourTV is providing access to archived videos, captioning costs would apply to this option when the video is made available 48 hours after the live event.

Option 5: Integrated Council Agenda, Minutes and Video Software

Several Ontario Municipalities have implemented integrated Council agenda, minutes and video software applications. As outlined in the [Communication Strategy Review Information Report \(http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2015/Documents/October/Oct-26-18f.pdf\)](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/CouncilMeetings/2015/Documents/October/Oct-26-18f.pdf) received by Council on October 26, 2015, there are several commercially available products that provide publicly available summaries of Council proceedings, searchable by topic with links to social media. These applications provide options such as linking video to specific agenda items, making it easier for citizens to access video on the specific agenda item without having to manually scan through the video.

As stated in the Information Report received by Council on October 26, 2015, Budget estimates to implement such technology, subject to Request for Proposal (RFP) and Project Management processes, would be:

	Year 1 (Supp)	Year 2-5 (Base)	Total 5 Year Cost
Software/Hardware	\$41,000	\$33,500	\$175,000
Staff Support/Implementation*	\$90,000	\$25,000	\$190,000
Budget Requirements	\$131,000	\$58,500	\$365,000

*Staff Support/Implementation assumes a 6 month project implementation in the first year requiring the resources of a Council Coordinator and ITS support. Years 2-5 are an estimate of potential ongoing administrative and technical support.

[Lambton County](#), [City of Sarnia](#), [City of Kitchener](#), [Town of Lakeshore](#) and the [City of St. Catharines](#) all utilize integrated Council Agenda, Minutes and Video Software.

This option was not recommended in the [Communication Strategy Review Information Report](#) (linked above).

Captioning costs would apply to this option if the video is made available after the live event.

The recommended option is a one year (25 meeting) pilot project of Option 4: Live Streaming of Council Meetings with YourTV. Administration would continue to partner with YourTV for posting the recorded meetings to the internet following a 48 hour time period. Due to changes in the YourTV and Municipal websites, these meetings would be captioned for the one year pilot.

Cost Summary

These are budgetary estimates and would be subject to confirmation following formal requests for proposal/quotations as per the Municipal Purchasing By-Law.

Option	Year 1 (Supplementary)	Year 2-5 (Base)	Total 5 Year Cost
Option 1: Live Only: Audio/Podium Streaming	Included in Existing Budget	Included in Existing Budget	Included in Existing Budget
Option 2: Live Only: Audio/Podium with Fixed Camera Option	Equipment: \$5,000	Equipment Lifecycle: \$1000	\$9,000
Option 3: Live Only: Third Party Video Production	Varies	Varies	Varies
Option 4: Live Only: Extending Partnership with YourTV	\$12,500 Based on 25 meetings/year	\$12,500 Based on 25 meetings/year	\$62,500
Option 5: Live Only: Integrated Council Agenda, Minutes and Video Software	\$131,000	\$58,500	\$365,000
In addition to the above options, to publish the prerecorded audio and/or video after the live event:			
Required for all Prerecorded Video to the internet: Captioning	Service: \$7,500 to \$11,250 Equipment: \$2,500	Service: \$7,500 to \$11,250 Equipment Lifecycle: \$250	\$41,250 to \$-60,000

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

- Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- People and Culture:
Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community
- Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

- Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Several municipalities were surveyed to determine their Council live and prerecorded streaming environment.

Consultation has taken place with the Municipal Clerk, Communications Officer and the Supervisor of Information Technology Service Delivery.

Financial Implications

Up to \$25,000 from the Strategic Development Reserve would be used for the YourTV per meeting fee and captioning of the videos.

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