



MUNICIPALITY OF **West Elgin**

Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting
From: J. Nethercott, Clerk
Date: 2020-06-18
Report: 2020-10
Subject: Use of Technology for Council Meetings

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from J. Nethercott, Clerk re: Use of Technology for Council Meetings for information purposes.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on the costs associated with required technology to host in person Council meetings with a 10 person gathering limit.

Background:

At the Council meeting on June 11, 2020 Council discussed the possibility of moving to in person Council meetings in July. With the current gathering limit set at 10 persons, staff and Council could meet in the same room and be within the provincial limit. Council meetings require a quorum of Council (which is 3) at the very least, but normally 5 members of Council, plus the Clerk, however normally all three Senior Staff attend Council, plus other staff that are presenting reports, who generally exit the meeting after their report is presented, this would meet the 10 person limit. However the concern is with ensuring the meeting meets the standard of open and transparent government as required by Section 239 of the Municipal Act, that all meetings are open to the public as with that calculation it only leaves the ability of 2 members of the public to attend. In order to comply with the Municipal Act, I believe we would need to web broadcast our meetings still via Zoom so that the public can watch and or listen to the meetings as they happen.

Currently our Council Chambers has no technology, other than a speaker phone. In order to broadcast an in person meeting West Elgin would need to purchase equipment:

- Smart TV at least 55 inch or larger
- 360 degree Video Conference Camera
- Microphone(s)

The costs for such equipment range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 on the lower end to \$30,000 on the higher end. For example one camera and microphone bundle that seems to fit the technology requirements and the size of the room would be approximately \$1,600.00 and then the cost of a Smart TV on top. There may also be delivery time delays, due to these items being very popular during this pandemic.

The alternative to purchasing such equipment, would be to operate as we have been, by using Zoom where each person wears a headset and sits at their own device. Using this we can all be in Council Chambers, but Council Members and staff would still need to speak into the device and may not be ideal.

If Council chooses to wait until the gathering size is increased to at least 20 persons, meetings could return to pre-COVID-19 format and staff would have to monitor the number of attendees from the public, but generally we could move staff in and out to accommodate the public.

Staff are hoping to integrate web broadcasting technology into a redesigned Council Chambers when the renovations of the municipal office are able to be completed.

Financial Implications:

Range of costs and expenses between \$3,000 and \$30,000 unbudgeted costs.

Policies/Legislation:

Municipal Act.