

**Teleconferencing Options for Council Chamber****Report Purpose**

To provide Council with options for teleconferencing in Council Chamber and to seek approval for the recommended option.

**Recommendation**

THAT Option One as described in the June 20, 2017, Legislative and Legal Services report, *Teleconferencing Options for Council Chamber*, be approved.

**Council History**

February 7, 2017 – THAT Administration provide a report before the end of the second quarter of 2017 that addresses the issues with participation in Council meetings by telephone, including identification of any more effective methods that may be available to allow for Councillor participation in meetings by electronic means.

**Strategic Plan Priority Areas**

**Economy:** The recommendation relates to improved use of County resources.

**Governance:** N/A

**Social:** N/A

**Culture:** N/A

**Environment:** N/A

**Other Impacts**

**Policy:** N/A

**Legislative/Legal:** This option would be compliant with the meeting requirements outlined in the Municipal Government Act.

**Interdepartmental:** Facility Services, Information Technology Services, and Legislative Services worked together to explore options for teleconference options.

**Summary**

Currently, if Councillors wish to participate in a Council or Priorities Committee meeting remotely, a staff member takes responsibility for monitoring the phone and managing any requests to speak. If more than one Councillor wishes to participate by phone, then the staff member will use a conference line and manage both Councillors' requests to speak. The current process require staff to manage the calls at all times and is cumbersome since it is not integrated into the existing Council Chamber sound system (i.e. phone participant is only heard via the microphone which is placed by the phone's speaker).

Council directed Administration to explore options for improved teleconferencing that are more effective and efficient than the current practice. Administration has provided analysis of two options (see below), but option one is Administration's recommended solution since it is the least complex, most cost effective, does not require additional staff time, and will comply with a unified communications system for Council Chamber.

**Option One: Conference Call Set-up (Clear One)**

This conference calling option integrates with the current Crestron and sound system and can be operated by the Clerk or Legislative Officers (i.e. a call can be muted, volume adjusted, or call ended).

**Cost:** This option would cost \$5000.00 for the required hardware and programming. In addition, each teleconference call would generate a fee (approximately \$26.00 for one 8-hour call). Fees are based on duration and number of callers. This option can be addressed within the existing operating budget.

**Process:** This option requires Administration to provide any Councillor participating by phone with a conference number and code. The codes would be changed frequently to ensure security. The Councillor who is participating remotely would call into the conference number to be added to the meeting.

### **Option Two: Microsoft Lync or Go To Meeting**

Similar to Option One, these software solutions allow for a unified communications system in Council Chamber. The Councillor(s) who are participating remotely would need to have a device with the appropriate software installed (i.e. either Lync or Go To Meeting). Council Chamber would also need a dedicated computer with the software installed. This system has the advantage of allowing the Councillor participating remotely to have video as well as audio, but there is increased risk since it would be difficult for staff to assist any Councillor experiencing difficulty with the software remotely.

**Cost:** This option would cost \$7500.00 for the additional computer in the Council Chamber AV rack and for the AV bridge required to connect the computer to the microphone system. In terms of staffing resources, this option could still require additional staffing resources since it is more complex and could mean logistical challenges for the Clerk and Legislative Officers.

**Process:** This option would mean that a Councillor wishing to participate in a meeting remotely would need to use the Lync or Go To Meeting software from a computer or tablet that is equipped with such software (i.e. a device in addition to the iPad used for agenda access and voting). Once logged in, the Councillor would have access to video and audio. The Municipality of Wood Buffalo has this system in place but Councillors have opted not to use it since they find it too complex.

### **Enclosure**

1. Teleconference Options presentation