



Memorandum

vancouver school board



Date: June 6, 2018
To: Committee I
From: J. David Green, Secretary-Treasurer
Re: **Live Streaming/Video Archiving of Board and Standing Committee Meetings**

ITEM 3

REFERENCE TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 2: Build capacity in our community through strengthening collective leadership

Objective:

- Enhance and support opportunities for parental engagement

Goal 3: Create a culture of care and shared social responsibility

Objective:

- Encourage and enhance practices that support cultural, emotional, physical and mental well-being
- Support collaborative relationships with community partners that enhance student learning and well-being

Goal 4: Provide effective leadership, governance and stewardship

Objectives:

- Support effective communication, engagement and community partnerships

INTRODUCTION:

This report is provided for information and contains a recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 29, 2018 meeting of the Board of Education the following motion was approved by the Board:

The Board direct staff to explore the feasibility of live streaming and video archiving the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) public meetings and Standing Committee meetings to increase citizens access to education proceedings and decision making.

The Board direct staff to prepare a report detailing the pros and cons of this initiative, including considerations such as technology requirements, one time and ongoing costs, human resources required etc. The report should also consider how other civic governments and boards of education have approached enhancing civic engagement through live streaming/video archiving their regular public meetings and hearings. The report should also explore the possibility of

partnering with the district's current Internet service provider (Telus) and other agencies to minimize any cost to the district.

The Board direct staff to prepare this report by February 28, 2018

The following rationale was provided at the January Board meeting to support the motion:

- We are living in a digital age where increasingly people of all ages are accessing the vast majority of information online and are engaging through social media platforms.
- Increasingly civic governments, including Boards of Education, are moving to live stream and archive meeting proceedings in an effort to improve citizen engagement through increased access, transparency and accountability.
- It is not always possible for citizens, especially busy parents, to attend meetings in person. Current and emerging technologies can enable the VBE to engage with citizens differently. Some of the noted benefits of moving to live streaming and video archiving include increased access, flexibility and awareness.
- The Vancouver Parks Board added live streaming of meetings in January 2015 and it has been well received by the public.

ANALYSIS:

The exploration of opportunities for live streaming and video archiving of Board and Standing Committee meetings has resulted in a broad range of options and a myriad of possibilities, with differing equipment/software requirements and hence differing feasibilities.

Previous VSB Reports

As a starting point district staff reviewed previous reports prepared for Committee I. These were dated September 2010, June 2015 and November 2015. The relevance of these reports, given advances in technology, has to be viewed cautiously. The most recent one, (attached from November 2015), does provide some information with respect to the direction staff was required to take in response to the Board motion above. It refers to the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Parks Board solutions for streaming and storage of their meetings, each with significant implementation and ongoing costs.

Other School Districts

An exploration of what other school districts are doing revealed that live streaming and archiving of board and committee meetings is relatively new, at least with respect to the districts that responded to our inquiries. A brief description of the responses is provided below:

- School District No. 36 (Surrey) – only just began using a meeting program called Escribe to video their meetings this May. They do not live stream the meetings but post it on their website the day following the meeting. They may move to live streaming once they are more comfortable with it have invested in better technology, possibly this summer;
- School District No. 35 (Langley) – invested approximately \$5,000 in equipment and software to enhance an “in-building” video capability to allow for live streaming to take

place. The live streaming is uploaded to YouTube. They use a software product called Telestream Wirecast along with a stationary camera for presenters and a movable camera that will zoom in on Board members as they speak. Dedicated computer equipment is required to operate the Telestream Wirecast software. The software allows the user to switch between multiple cameras and add overlays with names and dates to the image. This software can also be used on a mobile device to live stream any event 'on-the-go', should the district wish to do so. The district started using this technology in February and is still working out some initial glitches. Here is an example:

<https://www.sd35.bc.ca/news-events/district-board-news/view/board-news-tuesday-april-10-2018/>

- School District No. 68 (Nanaimo Ladysmith) – has been live streaming on YouTube since 2015. It seems Langley modeled their new system from Nanaimo as the equipment in Nanaimo is quite similar to what Langley is using along with the same software, Telestream Wirecast. They have upgraded some of the equipment since 2015 and added additional cameras and microphones but overall have spent less than \$10,000. This link <https://youtu.be/vNV-loUHibQ> demonstrates the quality of the live streaming the district produces.
- School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) – records their Board and committee meetings using a consumer video camera and tripod and posts them on the district website for viewing after the meeting at <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/board-of-education/meetings/>
- The following school districts also do variations of displaying their board and committee meetings but have not supplied details at the time of writing this report: North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, and Comox.

VSBC In-House Potential Solution

Since the November 2015 report was presented at Committee I the district has implemented a Skype for Business telecommunications solution. This program allows for VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) which enables users to use their computers as telephones with video capabilities. When asked if Skype for Business could be utilized to produce videos of our Board and committee meetings the LIT Director and CIO responded:

We can 'technically' record meetings with Skype for Business. To support this, we would need to invest in a high performance desktop computer that is stationed in the board room with a high quality wide-angle camera installed in a fixed location aimed at the board table with a high quality directional microphone that is focussed on the board members.

The cost is estimated (without research) to be in the range \$5,000-\$10,000 for hardware and installation.

It is possible to publish the videos into Microsoft Stream (an Office 365 service) for viewing by employees and students.

This potential solution is not live streaming as the video would be published after the meetings but it would be a step up from what Greater Victoria is doing. The potential to move this solution to live streaming exists as it is on Microsoft's roadmap to make it possible to link to Microsoft

Stream and stream videos via a public website. This program is not available yet and Microsoft has not provided a timeline for its availability.

Factors to Consider

With the rapid advances in technology, live streaming of Board and committee meetings will become a more acceptable way for Boards of Education to share their board and committee work with their communities. The cost to do that has to be a factor and the YouTube solutions that Nanaimo and Langley have implemented appear to be a reasonable cost to achieve the desired result of connecting with the community. Similar to Microsoft's Stream service, YouTube offers streaming service for free and most importantly, stores the video at zero cost. Other districts pay for streaming service and storage. It appears a solution could be achieved with an investment of up to \$10,000 but that is a cost per room and it would double for the district as standing committee meetings take place in Room 180.

While the Skype for Business solution has the potential to serve the district's needs in the future when Microsoft unveils its streaming program, the YouTube solution could certainly provide the desired result in the interim. An advantage Stream has over other solutions is that it is controlled through the VSB's Office 365 service.

There are also concerns about privacy if meetings are live streamed. The legal advice obtained from Harris & Company, contained in the November 2015 report attached, outlines the steps that need to be taken to ensure the protection of the privacy of all involved in live streaming. That advice is:

- Appropriate signage be posted in the rooms where video streaming is implemented;
- A speakers list with an explicit privacy consent/disclaimer be implemented for speakers to sign;
- A privacy consent/disclaimer signature procedure for trustees, stakeholders and staff who attend meetings that are video streamed;
- Camera views to not include members of the public who are attending the meetings – where this is not practical, members of the public would be required to sign a privacy consent/disclaimer form.

The issue of privacy related to live streaming will also require policy changes. For example, the Langley School District has added the following to its policy that addresses the Bylaws of the Board:

*AUDIO VISUAL RECORDING (WEBCASTING) OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETINGS
Regular and Special Meetings of the Board may be streamed live, archived and accessed online.
The Board reserves, at its sole discretion, via motion at any meeting, the right to not stream live or archive a meeting or a portion of a meeting. Further, the Board reserves the right to edit any recorded portion of a meeting.*

The district also refers to this policy change at the start of every Board meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education directs staff to investigate a live streaming solution for Board and standing committee meetings for implementation in September 2018.



November 4, 2015

TO: Management Committee 1

Item 5

FROM: Brian Kuhn, Director of Technology and CIO

RE: Video Streaming of Board and Committee Meetings - Update and Options

INTRODUCTION:

The intent of this report is to provide Committee 1 with a description of video streaming options and potential costs.

BACKGROUND:

Previous reports exploring options for video streaming were provided to Committee 1 in September 2010 and more recently on June 3, 2015.

This report is provided at the request of the Board at the June 3, 2015 Committee 1 meeting for staff to further investigate and bring back options for video streaming Board and Committee meetings, to Committee 1 for consideration.

Staff have investigated the systems and process implemented at the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks Board, and obtained advice from a local audio / video consultant.

ANALYSIS

City of Vancouver (CoV)

The CoV has formal meeting conduct requirements for displaying agendas and managing a speaker queue. Council members press their mic button to register themselves in the speaker's queue which is displayed for the public to see. The Chair uses a touch panel to select speakers which causes a camera to pan, zoom, and focus on the next speaker as their turn to speak arrives. As well, the Chair selects camera or presentation view as the meeting items dictate. Each council member has a touch tablet on which they view the agenda, their place in the speakers queue, the presentation slides (if present), and the amount of time left in their speaking 'budget'.

To facilitate the meeting processes, the CoV system uses five high-end HD studio quality video cameras. These cameras will cover the whole board as well as pan and zoom on demand to the active speaker while providing secondary recording angles. These automatic functions negate the need for a person to be controlling the camera direction and zoom levels.

Meeting conduct software was customized to manage agendas, speaker queues, and electronic voting in such a way to support organized and transparent meeting management. Microphones are integrated with the software to support and control the speaker queues such that when a speaker presses their mic button, the software registers and displays that speaker's intent to speak.

A video streaming company, NeuLion provides a service to encode, live stream, record, and store (archive) video content. NeuLion provides a secure portal for CoV staff to edit video into clips that match agenda items. For the public, a web page and video player (<http://civic.neulion.com/cityofvancouver/>) integrates the (live or recorded/on-demand) video stream and archives into the CoV website. An operator (chairperson or staff member) can switch the feed from camera to presentation and back but cannot integrate and display both simultaneously.

The cost to implement this system was approximately \$280,000 plus a video streaming / storage / access fee (~\$200 / month), and staff time to operate and support the system, and to edit video streams. The general public has free access to the live and archived video streams of the meetings.

The CoV is in the process of requesting proposals from the marketplace to procure a more sophisticated meeting management software platform to manage public and in-camera meetings.

Vancouver Parks Board (VPB)

The VPB has implemented a less capable version of the system used by the CoV. The VPB employs three lower quality cameras that must be remote controlled (pan and zoom) manually during meetings. They have two 8" tablet screens for monitoring and controlling the meetings and cameras. They also use the same meeting conduct software and use the same video streaming company that the CoV uses.

A staff member is required to be at all meetings to control the camera view and zoom, and speaker queue as the meeting is conducted such that they can show the whole board and zoom in on the current speaker. This same staff member edits the video stream after the meeting into clips that align with each agenda item. This is done as a convenience to the public who choose to view the meetings after the fact (on-demand).

The cost to implement this system was approximately \$75,000. There are also costs such as a video streaming / storage / access fee (~\$200/month), and staff time to operate and support the system, and to edit video streams. The general public has free access to the live and archived video streams of the meetings.

Other Cities

Some other lower mainland cities use a simpler and less costly approach whereby one camera is used and is preset to display the board table (wide angle shot). In some cases, staff will write the meeting minutes after the meetings offline while watching the recorded video.

Other School Districts

Burnaby uses a three-camera system to record their meetings and store them locally for archival purposes – they are not currently available to the public. They also use Shaw Cable to record and through delayed broadcasting, make the meetings available to the public although this service is expected to end.

Vancouver School Board

There are a range of possibilities and questions for the VSB Board to consider. This includes but is not limited to:

- Is camera control (pan-tilt-zoom) and multiple angles needed?
- What quality and resolution of camera is required?
- Is it necessary to record video streams and host for post-meeting viewing?
- If recorded, is editing of the video required (titling, cutting, etc.)
- Is it a requirement to show camera views with presentation slides simultaneously?
- Will agenda documents be posted online for Board use during meetings and to provide public access (paperless)?
- What meeting controls (eg, speaker queuing) are necessary and by whom?

It will be important to discuss, capture, and prioritize the capabilities and features the Board requires for a meeting conduct and video streaming solution. As well, if video streaming and meeting conduct is required in multiple meeting spaces at the VSB, additional infrastructure and equipment costs would be incurred.

When attending a public meeting, individuals can have no expectation of privacy. However, there may be sensitivities to video recording certain individuals that are in attendance.

Staff consulted with Harris & Co with respect to the privacy implications of the BC FIPPA (freedom of information protection of privacy act). Harris & Co advise that:

- Appropriate signage be posted in the rooms where video streaming is implemented
- A speakers list with an explicit privacy consent / disclaimer be implemented for speakers to sign
- A privacy consent / disclaimer signature procedure be implemented for Trustees, Stakeholders, and staff who attend meetings that are video streamed
- Camera views do not include members of the public attending meetings – where this is not practical, members of the public would be required to sign a privacy consent / disclaimer form

CONCLUSION:

A thorough understanding of what the Board envisions as the capabilities for a meeting conduct / video streaming solution is required before a recommended solution and cost can be provided.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is recommended that:

Staff conduct a meeting with the Board to articulate and document the requirements for conducting and video streaming Board and Committee meetings and that subsequently a specific solution be designed and costs determined.