



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of October 4, 2018**

---

**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Chris Coates, City Clerk  
**Subject:** Voting and Attendance Dashboard

---

**Date:** September 24, 2018

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Direct staff to proceed with the implementation of a voting dashboard for Council meetings in Quarter 1 of 2019.
2. Approve the initial dashboard to consist of voting and attendance records for the twice monthly Council meetings.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the May 24, 2018, Committee of the Whole Meeting the Council Member Report, attached as Appendix A, was considered and staff were directed to report back on an implementation plan to establish a voting record dashboard.

Earlier this year the City changed webcasting and council agenda management service providers to a single provider for both functions. The new meeting management program provides the ability to import voting and attendance data, recorded in the meeting minutes, from the software into another program to create a voting and attendance record dashboard. There is software and technical work required to make the voting dashboard functional.

An example of the City of Vancouver's voting dashboard is attached as Appendix B for information. Vancouver's dashboard covers a number of different meeting types and provides multiple options to record the voting such as votes for, against, declared conflict of a member being absent.

There are options to consider in terms of how the City's dashboard would look, and different from Vancouver there is only Committee of the Whole and Council meetings for which Council members vote on issues relating to the City. In view of this, and in particular that Committee of the Whole is not delegated any decision making authority, it is proposed that at least initially, the voting and attendance information consist of that from Council meetings, where the final decision making occurs. All Committee of the Whole recommendations must be ratified at a Council meeting.

Given the scope of work necessary to implement the dashboard, staff consider that the necessary steps can be implemented for full operation in Q1 of 2019 and depending on the actual date of the

dashboard is ready, would go back to include all voting at Council meetings from the start of 2019 if need be.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to report back on the implementation of a voting and attendance dashboard resulting from Council's direction in April 2018.

## **BACKGROUND**

There is an increasing trend toward expanded transparency in local government decision making. Larger centres across Canada are creating voting dashboards as a means to inform the public on the voting records of individual elected officials.

At the May 24, 2018 Council meeting, a Council member motion, attached as Appendix A was considered and the following motion was passed:

**"That Council direct staff to report back with an implementation plan for establishing a Council Meeting Voting Record and Attendance Dashboard".**

## **ISSUES & ANALYSIS**

In April 2018, the City switched service providers for meeting management and webcasting software to a unified platform to manage Council and Committee of the Whole meetings. The new platform integrates data used in meeting agendas, minutes and reports into data sets that can be imported with relative ease into other documents. The City incorporates both meeting attendance and voting information into meeting minutes as a matter of course. This data can be exported into a new format to serve the basis for the dashboard without having to recreate or transpose the data.

While there is some degree of labour involved it is considered to be minimal in nature and not adversely impact on current resources in a significant manner.

Council meets in two distinct open meeting formats Committee of the Whole in which decision making does not occur, rather recommendations are made to Council; and Council where final decision making occurs. It is proposed the initial approach to the dashboard would involve Council meetings. Committee of the Whole, if considered important the dashboard could be expanded in time to include Committee of Whole meetings.

In terms of timing for implementation Quarter 1 of 2019 is the earliest opportunity given the resource constraints involving the election, existing priorities, and workload of Legislative Services and IT staff required. Regardless of the actual date of implementation in Q1, the Dashboard would go back to the start of 2019.

## **OPTIONS & IMPACTS**

The following options are noted for Council's consideration:

### **Option 1 – Implement Attendance and Voting Dashboard for Council Meetings (Recommended)**

This option records the actual final decisions of Council only and the attendance at the meetings in which those decisions are made.



**Option 2 – Implement attendance and Voting Dashboard for Council and Committee of the Whole Meetings.**

This option would result in recording of all voting and attendance at all open meetings Council whether sitting as Committee of the Whole or as Council.

Option 1 is recommended as it addresses the final decision making and could be construed as providing better clarity on both the actual final motions that are passed by Council, recognizing that there are instances where COTW recommendations are altered in the final consideration at a Council meeting, as well as avoiding duplication of results.

In addition, Option1 provides an opportunity for the busy staff in Legislative Services to transition into the new process which does have a small impact on the ability to produce other material such as meeting agendas and minutes in a timely manner.

*Accessibility Impact Statement*

The Voting Dashboard would be available on the City's website and support screen readers to ensure that the blind and visually impaired are able to receive the information contained in it.

*2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan*

The Voting and Attendance Dashboard is consistent with Objective 13 of the Strategic Plan demonstrating Regional Leadership. Upon implementation the City would be the first local government in the Capital Region to establish a dashboard specific for these purposes.

*Impacts to Financial Plan*

There are no specific impacts on the Financial Plan to accomplish the Dashboard. Existing resources would be used to create and update it.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Council has directed staff to proceed with the implementation of a voting and attendance dashboard to provide heightened transparency around decision making in the City. The proposed implementation plan would address Council direction while managing the impacts on staffing in a manner not to create any significant draw on resourcing.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Coates  
City Clerk

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date:

Sept. 28, 2018

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix A – Council Member Report-Voting and Attendance Dashboard
- Appendix B – City of Vancouver Voting Dashboard