



2024 Budget Request

Request: Council Chamber Upgrades

Department: Corporate Services

Request ID: COR2024BUDGET-C-04

Financial Ask: \$100,000

Funding Source: Capital – Administration Capital

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

Council Chambers is the room in which all meetings of Council are held, it is the space where Township business is discussed and key decisions which impact the entire local community are made. This prominent community space currently allows for residents to participate with and observe their elected officials at work in both person and virtually.

Further, Council Chambers represent one of the more intensively used meeting spaces in use by Township staff, used daily for hosting community, stakeholder, staff and business meetings, frequently that rely on 'hybrid' style discussions and presentation capabilities.

Strategic Priority – Improve communications to foster public engagement and participation.

Analysis

Staff has identified opportunity and need to update the existing technology infrastructure within Council Chambers to support its use and has also identified potential opportunities for reconfiguring the layout of Chambers to support greater accessibility to and mixed use of Council Chambers.



Technology

The Township uses a 'live streaming' service to record meetings and to provide for live and interactive participation in discussions in Council Chambers. This system was purchased from CTRE in 2020. In February 2023 staff received notification that CTRE Productions was no longer in business.

With CTRE no longer being in business, the existing equipment is no longer supported, and the Township is currently at risk of not being able to broadcast meeting on the YouTube channel. Staff have addressed this immediate risk with the purchase of a new, mobile streaming solution, as recently used at Shallow Lake Arena.

Staff are proposing the removal of current equipment which has been installed within Council chambers and installing new equipment which is similar to that which was used for off-site locations. The system recently used at Shallow Lake would continue to support offsite meetings and would serve as a back up if the primary installed system at Council Chambers was offline for any reason.

The Township currently uses two projectors and screens to display materials in Chambers and to host hybrid meetings. Recently, one of the two projectors has ceased to function, and staff are having challenges seeking a remedy to this; the two units appear to no longer be in production and supported.

With the difficulties that have been experienced with the projectors staff recommend Council moving from the projector screens, to using TV screens. This would eliminate the need for the projector screens and would also allow for a far clearer view of on-screen materials as TV screens are brighter and better able to address ambient lighting challenges occasionally experienced in Chambers.

Renovation

Staff also believe that the space of Council Chambers could be reconfigured to better utilize the space, provide a more flexible venue for discussions and meetings and to address accessibility issues in the current Chamber. The current horseshoe seating is configured for 9, yet the Township is served by seven members, and its elevated position establishes accessibility challenges.

By removing additional seating at the horseshoe and eliminating the need for ramps to an elevated podium, staff believe that the remaining floor space could be better configured to a range of meeting layouts.

Next Steps

If budget is approved, staff will undertake to develop a plan and bring this forward for Council review and recommendations.



Financial Impact

Staff believe there are efficiencies to be gained from doing these projects in tandem, minimizing the downtime and loss of the Chambers space, and maximizing efficiency of any require construction works that may be required.

Staff estimate that addressing the existing technology needs would have a budget impact of \$25,000.

Staff estimate that the physical renovations to Council Chambers would have a budget impact of \$75,000.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Budget Request Council Chamber Technology and Upgrades.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 14, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Samantha Buchanan, Treasurer

Niall Loble, Director of Community Services