
TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF A DIGITAL (PAPERLESS) AGENDA PACKAGE

WARD: ALL

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: C. LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That should a member of Council wish to switch to a paperless agenda package utilizing his/her existing device, the member advise Legislative staff accordingly and the necessary arrangements be made to implement the individual's decision.
2. That staff consider the complete elimination of paper agenda packages for the 2018 to 2022 term of Council.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

3. The purpose of this staff report is to report back regarding the potential to transition to a digital (paperless) agenda on either a partial or complete basis.
4. In May of 2016, City Council adopted motion 16-G-097 concerning the preparation of a business case to implement a digital (paperless) agenda package, as follows:

"That staff in the Information Technology and Legislative and Court Services Departments prepare a report for General Committee's for consideration in the Fall of 2016 on the business case associated with transitioning to a digital (paperless) agenda package."
5. As far back as the late-1990s, staff has had internal discussions regarding the potential to move to a paperless agenda package. At the time, the limited functionality of digital agenda packages, the relative lack of interest from members of Council and the less than reliable internet connection in the Council Chamber were considered to be barriers to the implementation.

6. Although a paperless agenda package was not implemented, staff in Legislative Services began publishing the agenda to the City's website utilizing Adobe Acrobat and eventually linked pdfs. In 2008, the City acquired Legistar®, a software application utilized to create agendas and minutes for all meetings of City Council, General Committee, Reference Committees and Advisory Committees supported by the Legislative and Court Services Department. It is part of a suite of products available from Granicus to support the legislative framework and decision making process.
7. Legistar® allows staff to manage the entire legislative process from start to finish. It is designed as an automated solution to reduce workloads and create a more efficient method for managing decisions. It allows staff to relatively quickly and easily publish agenda and minutes documents to the Web, helping to ensure records availability and promote transparency.
8. A position in the Legislative Services Branch that became vacant in 2008/early 2009 has been left unfilled since the implementation of Legistar®. The efficiencies related to agenda production along with changes to other services provided by Legislative staff has allowed for the vacancy to continue to this date.
9. A separate module offered by the same company called iLegislate®, enables government officials to review meeting agendas and associated materials on tablets or desktops that support iOS, Android, Windows or OS X. The iLegislate® app when used on an iPad allows for enhanced functionality to permit a member of Council to highlight and/or make notes as reminders of comments or questions associated with the meeting agenda. The iLegislate® app is available for free.
10. The 2014 to 2018 members of Barrie City Council were provided with a variety of options related to smart phones, tablets and/or desktops for their work related to their role on Council. The current utilization of tablets and laptops is as follows:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Device and Operating System</u>
3	Apple iPads (iOS)
1	Galaxy (Android)
4	Tablets (Windows)
3	Laptops (Windows)

11. In 2015, as part of the accessibility upgrades to the Council Chamber, the WiFi was improved allowing for a more reliable connection than had previously been available.

ANALYSIS

12. Most weeks, between 25 and 28 copies of the agenda package are produced (members of Council, Student Mayors, one subscriber, staff copies, one back up copy and a permanent record for the file), requiring over 110,000 pieces of paper and 212,165 print impressions. In 2015, the annual cost associated with the supplies, printing and delivery of all of the packages as well as processing members of Council's mail for delivery with their packages was estimated to be \$5,800.

13. The 2016 costs are estimated to be approximately \$9,000 based on the first three quarters of the year. These estimates do not include the approximately 675 hours of staff time spent solely on the printing of the agenda packages and delivering them to members of Council's homes.
14. If individual members of Council wish to eliminate the receipt of their paper packages and utilize their existing devices (with the different devices varying levels of functionality), there is no cost to implement this option immediately as the iLegislate® app is available for free. There is limited to no difference for Legislative staff in the amount of time required to publish the agenda for the app as the process is essentially the same as publishing it to the web.
15. However, it is important to note, that only those members of Council who currently have an iPad would receive the enhanced functionality associated with version of the iLegislate® app available for iOS devices, at this time. This option also assumes that the members of Council would not require support to operate their devices.
16. Many staff who regularly attend Council have not been issued a tablet and would require the enhanced functionality to be adequately prepared to respond to questions from members of Council. Eliminating all paper copies would require the acquisition of additional devices. In order to facilitate Information Technology support, it would be most effective if the same type of device with the same functionality was utilized by all members of Council and staff.
17. Staff in the IT Department has estimated that the cost associated with acquiring and/or replacing devices is approximately \$24,000. Funds have not been included in the 2016 or 2017 Business Plan for the acquisition of additional/replacement tablets.
18. Many municipalities with a paperless agenda require IT support for at least the first hour to hour and half of the meeting to address any challenges that users are experiencing. It is estimated that the cost associated with the additional IT support for General Committee and Council meetings would be approximately \$7,300.
19. If all paper copies were eliminated, it is estimated that between \$5,750 and \$9,000 could be saved annually related to supplies, photocopy costs and gas for deliveries. The move to a digital agenda package would also have an environmental benefit as fewer trees would need to be cut. As the staff time would be reallocated to other printing and delivery work, and it would only reduce the lieu time currently generated, eliminating paper copies would not result in a reduction in salary and benefit costs. As noted earlier in the report, the efficiencies associated with utilizing Legistar® to create agendas and minutes were achieved a number of years ago.
20. Based on the above, it is anticipated that it would take 2.67 to 4.17 years to achieve a return on the investment related to the costs associated with the acquisition of the hardware if a paperless agenda was to be implemented. The costs associated with IT support of approximately \$7,300 per year would be ongoing.
21. Given the cost implications and the time frame associated with the return on investment, staff is recommending that if a member of Council wishes to switch to a paperless agenda package, the member advise Legislative staff accordingly and the necessary arrangements will be made to implement the individual decision(s).
22. It is anticipated that the current devices utilized by members of Council will require replacement for the 2018 to 2022 term and by that time more staff will be issued tablets. Likely, the price of the tablets will decrease as well. As such, staff is recommending that a wholesale elimination of paper agenda be considered for the 2018 to 2022 term of Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

23. The following environmental matters are related to the recommended motion:
- a) Although the City utilizes paper with a significant post-consumer recycled content, each paper agenda package eliminated would save trees to be cut and the associated environmental costs associated with logging.

ALTERNATIVES

24. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1

General Committee could recommend that all paper copies of the agenda package be eliminated starting in 2017.

Additional funds in the amount of approximately \$25,000 (hardware and support costs) would need to be included in the 2017 Business Plan to support the implementation.

Alternative #2

General Committee could recommend that members of Council not be permitted to switch to a paperless agenda package.

This alternative is not recommended as there isn't a cost associated with individual members switching to a paperless agenda copy as long as the member utilizes his/her current device.

FINANCIAL

25. There are no direct financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the recommended motion to permit a member of Council wish to switch to a paperless agenda package where a member utilizes his/her current device.

LINKAGE TO 2014-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN

26. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report are not directly related to the goals identified in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan.