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REPORT TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

SUBJECT Electronic Voting for Regional and Hospital Board

ISSUE

The CRD Hospital Board and Regional District Board have complex voting based upon requirements set out in the *Local Government Act*. Currently voting is counted and calculated manually by staff. Technology exists that could automate the process and render results electronically, resulting in potential efficiencies and time-saving during meetings.

BACKGROUND

Regional Districts, unlike municipal Councils, are required under legislation to have weighted voting at both the Hospital District and Regional District Board meetings. This weighted voting system involves a different number of votes per Director, assigned based on their municipalities' population. The CRD Hospital District and CRD Regional District Boards have 24 members each, and a total of 86 weighted votes. In addition, some votes are restricted to specific participants or voting blocks. The multiple types of voting options include:

(NWA) Non-weighted All	One director = One vote
(WA) Weighted All	Each Director = Weighted Vote (from 1-5)
(WP) Weighted Participants	Each Director from a Participating Municipality = Weighted Vote
Voting Blocks A & B	Non-weighted vote from participant municipalities as per regulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: JDF EA/Colwood/Langford/Metchosin/Sooke • B: JDF EA/C. Saanich/Highlands/Langford/Saanich (Mayor)

The type of vote on each item is determined by legislation, applied by staff to each item on the agenda and published on the agenda prior to the meeting. Weighted voting does not occur at the standing committees, but does apply to the Regional Water Supply Commission.

In addition to weighted voting, the required majority for a successful vote may vary based upon the motion. Some votes, including weighted votes, require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Using the February Hospital and Regional Boards as an example, the breakdown of number of votes was as follows:

- NWA – 26 votes
- Weighted votes – 11 votes
- Voting Blocks – 2 votes

During meetings, each vote in opposition is counted pursuant to a requirement in the CRD Procedures Bylaw, and the result of each vote is calculated manually or with the aid of a spreadsheet. Factors that can complicate the vote include: the presence of Alternate Directors; Directors absent from the room at the time of the vote; dividing of the question, amendments and ancillary motions, including referrals, postponements, and points of order.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That staff report back to committee on the feasibility and implications of installing electronic voting for Regional Board and Hospital Board meetings.

Alternative 2

That staff continue the current process of manual vote counting and calculation for the Regional and Hospital District Boards.

IMPLICATIONS

Current vote tracking is complex and can be time-consuming in meetings. A recent example of the complexity of this process was during voting on the provisional budget where the question was divided, and there was a succession of approximately 12 weighted votes. While staff have confidence in the manual system currently in place, the time spent and potential for error in calculating votes manually or with the assistance of a spreadsheet can increase on accumulation, given the number of votes at any given Board meeting.

It is in the interest of both Staff and Directors to explore options for continuous improvement of Board procedures and adopt new technologies that may assist in streamlining meetings, where feasible to do so. There may be the potential to implement an electronic voting method whereby each Director would enter in their vote (in favor/in opposition) and the calculation would be done electronically and transmitted to the Deputy Corporate Officer to confirm via the Chair.

Metro Vancouver is the only comparable Regional District in the Province with similar complexity to their voting structure. Their Board consists of 40 Directors representing 23 member jurisdictions. Their 40 Directors have 134 votes, and their Chair and Corporate Officer use an electronic method for counting and calculating votes.

Financial Implications

Investigation of the feasibility of electronic voting would be covered under current budget allocations. Any possible options for installation of electronic voting would be brought forward to committee for consideration and would include the cost for installation and ongoing support.

CONCLUSION

The Capital Regional District has a complex voting structure and considerable time and attention at the Board can be spent tracking and calculating the votes. Given the importance of accuracy and the other responsibilities of the Chair and staff to help guide the meeting, investigating possibilities to automate vote counting and calculation is recommend.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance Committee recommends:

That staff report back to committee on the feasibility and implications of installing electronic voting for Regional Board and Hospital Board meetings.

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Attachments:

Appendix A: 2018 Weighted Vote Distribution