



Making a difference...together

**REPORT TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2018**

---

**SUBJECT**     **Electronic Vote Tabulation – Additional Information**

**ISSUE**

To provide additional information on the feasibility and cost of installing an electronic vote tabulation system for Board meetings

**BACKGROUND**

At its February 28, 2018 Governance Committee meeting, the Committee passed the following motion:

*That staff report back to Committee on the feasibility and implications of installing electronic voting for Regional Board and Hospital Board Meetings.*

Staff identified the following requirements for an electronic voting system:

- Capable of calculating weighted vote results, and different voting combinations including voting blocks;
- Capable of displaying results during meetings, both to Directors and to live webcast;
- Allows electronic storage of vote results;
- Accessible to Directors on current hardware (iPads);
- Allows for electronic voting from an offsite location;
- Accessible from the current agenda application to avoid Directors toggling between applications during meetings;
- No additional staff time require to pre-load voting configurations per item;
- No additional meeting time required to administer the electronic vote.

Staff scanned existing applications currently available to Directors and researched the capabilities of Granicus (iLegislate) the current agenda management application. Two potential options were identified:

	<b>Option 1: Custom Built Application</b>	<b>Option 2: Switch to eSCRIBE</b>
<b>Estimated cost of development and implementation</b>	<b>\$46,000</b>	<b>\$101,000</b>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can meet voting tabulation requirements</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can meet all identified requirements</li><li>• Offers other desirable features in addition to electronic voting</li><li>• Does not require toggling between applications</li><li>• Used by several BC local governments</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customizable security features allow for use by all CRD commissions and committees</li></ul>
<b>Drawbacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires screen toggling or additional hardware</li><li>• No interaction between voting/webcast/Granicus (iPad software)</li><li>• Results can be displayed on projector screen but cannot be linked into webcast</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More expensive</li><li>• New system would requiring training and orientation for staff and Directors</li><li>• Implementation cost is greater than a custom application</li></ul>

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

That the Governance Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff not proceed with implementation of electronic vote tabulation at this time; and
2. Electronic voting and updated agenda management software be advanced in the next service planning cycle.

### *Alternative 2*

That the Governance Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff be directed to reprioritize service plans and prepare a financial plan amendment to replace the current agenda management system with eSCRIBE.

## **DISCUSSION**

A primary objective for staff in installing an electronic voting system is to ensure ease of use for Directors and create a more efficient Board process. While a custom voting application is the more affordable options, toggling between applications at meetings could potentially cause confusion and delay the voting process.

Granicus has been in use at the CRD since early 2015. It is an effective tool but has some limitations. When staff were evaluating agenda management software options in 2014, eSCRIBE did not have the range of products and services that it offers today. While Granicus does have an iPad voting application, it is unable to calculate weighted votes or accommodate voting blocks and cannot be customized to meet this need. Transferring to eSCRIBE would allow for electronic voting without toggling between applications, and would meet all the requirements set out by staff. One notable feature that eSCRIBE offers that Granicus does not is the ability to restrict access to closed agenda items. The absence of this feature in Granicus prevents staff from allowing committee or commission members that are not Directors from utilizing the system. Installing a system that is accessible to all CRD committees and commission would provide additional meeting support for those bodies.

A custom voting application may offer a quick fix for electronic voting, but it is building upon an agenda management system that may require updates in future, potentially rendering the custom

voting application obsolete in a short time-frame. The City of Victoria is currently undergoing a transition from Granicus to eSCRIBE allowing CRD the opportunity to learn how that transition progresses in Victoria before advancing any changes to our current agenda management system.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This project was not identified in the 2018 financial plan or department service plans and would require a capital plan amendment to proceed. In addition, installation of an electronic voting system could require additional temporary staff resources to assist with implementation and staff orientation on the new system, as legislative services staff are working at full capacity on the current service mandate in addition to preparing for the 2018 election and orientation of the new Board.

### **CONCLUSION**

While an electronic voting manager is possible given current technologies, either existing or custom built, the financial capital required and the time investment from staff would be significant. Recent governance motions have indicated that there is a larger goal to increase meeting efficiency; work directed under these initiatives would likely be a more cost effective method to assist Board meetings to run smoothly. Further consideration can be given to electronic voting in the next service planning cycle.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Governance Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff not proceed with implementation of electronic vote tabulation at this time; and
2. Electronic voting and updated agenda management software be advanced in the next service planning cycle.

Submitted by:	Emilie Gorman, MPA, Manager, Legislative Services & Deputy Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, JD, General Manager, Corporate Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EG:KM

Attachments: Appendix A – Staff Report from February 28, 2018 Governance Meeting: Electronic Voting