 COBOURG	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG	
	STAFF REPORT Committee of the Whole Meeting	
TO:	Mayor and Council Members	
FROM:	Brent Larmer	
TITLE:	Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services	
DATE OF MEETING:	Monday, July 20, 2020	
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Proposed Change in Agenda Meeting Software – eScribe.	
REPORT DATE:	April 23, 2020	File #:

1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

This report addresses one (1) Council Strategic Plan Objective: Continue to explore communications priorities including social media and public engagement tools.

Town of Cobourg Municipal Council's Strategic Planning Mission Statement:

The Town of Cobourg is committed to open and accountable governance and the provision of quality, accessible programs and services in a sustainable manner

PROGRAMS	The Town provides efficient and effective corporate, community, business and recreational services for its residents, businesses and visitors
Strategic Actions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an information technology strategic plan 2. Develop an integrated records management system 3. Implement a comprehensive management plan for all of the Town's assets 4. Explore the feasibility of enhanced sidewalk snow clearing including the clearing of arterial bike lanes and multi-use paths 5. Review and assess appropriateness of agreements with third party contracts 6. Continue to explore communications priorities including social media and public engagement tools 	
Desired Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be well informed, know what is going on in the Town and how to get information • The Town will be resilient and safe from cyber attacks • Information will be easier and faster to access through a variety of means • People will be informed with the facts • Information will be stored in a way that is accessible for present and future generations • Public trust and confidence in the Town's processes and procedures will be enhanced 	

2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Legislative Services/Municipal Clerk's Department is an essential link between the General Public, Municipal Council, Municipal Staff and all other intergovernmental relations. As part of the Legislative Services mandate, our department helps to facilitate accountability, integrity and innovation in governance and deliver a variety of legislative, corporate and public services to residents in the community.

This Staff report outlines efficient and effective ways to engage the public with local government and its elected officials related to Municipal Council business and decisions in an more open, transparent and accessible way.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the report from the Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct and authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute an agreement with eSCRIBE Software Limited for the provision of the eSCRIBE Transparency Bundle for the Town of Cobourg Meeting Management Software to be implemented and functional by October 1, 2020 in the amount of \$11,300 including HST as approved in the 2020 Operating Budget for the first year and \$10,300 for the second year and \$10,609 for the third year which includes a 3% adjustment each year; and

FURTHER THAT Council authorize an additional amount of \$4,925.00 to be funded from the Provincial Building Efficiencies Funding to be put towards the initialization and implementation of the eScribe Board Management Module and the eSCRIBE Public Comments and Delegation Request Mgmt Module, in order to better increase Council and Advisory Committee Meeting efficiency and transparency.

4.0 ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

As Council is aware, the Town of Cobourg holds multiple meetings per month, including Regular Council, Committee of the Whole, Coordinator Meetings, Advisory and Local Board Meetings, Quasi-Judicial and Public meetings. Over the years, staff have developed common report, agenda and minutes templates, correspondence, notices, reports, and other information, in various hard-copy and electronic formats, which are gathered by the Municipal Clerk and various Committee Secretaries responsible for preparing agendas each month. The agenda materials are eventually combined into a pdf format document which is distributed to Council/Committee members and staff, and posted on the Town of Cobourg Civic web/iCompass website.

The Municipal Clerk has been investigating meeting and agenda management systems to improve internal reporting, agenda and minute preparation processes, meeting controls, and document accessibility by Council and Committee members

and the public. The intention of the ongoing investigations of new and innovative systems is to uncover and create time savings for staff, and cost savings for the Municipal Clerk and the entire Corporation both with the cost of the system and the elimination of extra work and duplication of work by staff.

5.0 BACKGROUND

On November 5, 2012, the Town of Cobourg entered into an agreement with ICompass Meeting Management Solution in order to automate meetings, records and content management workflow in to one system and facilitates open governance through comprehensive and seamless access to information. In the last eight (8) years the Town has successfully implemented and managed an online agenda management system for the Town of Cobourg and in order to maintain a successful efficient and effective process it is time that Corporation look to improve the system either at a lower cost or at increased efficiency.

Agenda Management System:

There are several municipalities using an Electronic Agenda Management Provider to streamline and improve this process. An Electronic Agenda Management System is a software application that is used to electronically create meeting documents, route them for review and approval (workflow) and publish those documents to websites. An Electronic Agenda management System easily provides the opportunity to generate records from reports, and minutes from agendas, and Council directives or action items from the minutes for staff to complete. An electronic agenda management system essentially manages the documents from creation to archive for easy retrieval. It allows for a single source publishing meaning content is entered once into the report template and once entered it is used on multiple documents (agenda, motions) through to minute completion.

In an effort to reduce staff time and errors related to agenda preparations, the Clerk's Office wanted to improve the openness and transparency of agenda preparations, minute preparations and addendum procedures in order to improve the workflow process and eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of work. Staff has determined that it is now time to review and look for more efficiencies in the Meeting Management process and move to a platform that suits the needs of our municipality.

6.0 ANALYSIS

Since early 2017, the Municipal Clerk has been reviewing the challenges and benefits to iCompass/Civic Web which is the current Meeting Management Software for the Town of Cobourg. The challenges were growing, and concerns were rising over the efficiency of the services with iCompass, minutes and agendas and there was duplication in work while creating agendas and minutes, causing increase in staff time dedicated to the agenda process as opposed to having staff provide other service delivery duties and tasks also needing the attention of Staff.

As part of the Agenda meeting process, it is the responsibility of the Municipal Clerk's office to create, build and publish meeting agendas from start to finish including meeting minutes and follow-up. Most recently with the departure of the Records Management/Committee Coordinator the Municipal Clerk has been the main individual utilizing the system in its entirety which has resulted in many observations of areas needing increased efficiency and has determined that the accessible process through iCompass was increasing staff time in agenda and minutes preparation and is no longer meeting the current needs or expectations of the municipality.

Comparisons have been made to the processes and steps it takes to create and publish agendas. This was done through the LEAN management process based on the following methodologies:

1. Deliver value from your customer's (resident's) perspective;
2. Eliminate waste and redundancy (things that don't bring value to the end product); and
3. Continuous improvement.

Below are the steps that staff were undertaking in order to complete agendas and minutes with comparisons between the two products.

Step	iCompass Agenda	eScribe Agenda
1	Create meeting site	
2	Build agenda template by dragging in items from the tools menu	Create meeting site – templates already in place depending on meeting
3	Create heading/title and recommendations for each staff report, by-law, items for information etc.	Add staff reports, by-laws, items for consideration etc. in appropriate place on agenda – software will automatically populate names, recommendation, attachments etc (staff reports are prepared in eScribe and integrated into the agenda)
4	PDF all reports and attachments	CAO approves reports online and reports are attached to agenda automatically and pdfs are generated once attached.
5	Attach items individually per item (staff reports are create on the users individual computer and without a template)	Prepare draft agenda

6	Add recommendations manually by re-typing each into each item	Publish draft agenda & automatically linked to eSolutions online calendar & notice is delivered to recipients.
7	Prepare draft agenda	
8	Edit draft agenda to remove extra spaces or items not required	
9	Save and upload edited agenda to iCompass	
10	Prepare for publishing	
11	Send to staff for posting	

Step	iCompass - Minutes	eScribe – Minutes
1	Prepare minutes in hard copy as draft	Prepare minutes and amendments as the meeting is happening as well as auto populating resolution numbers
2	Manually insert movers and seconders and decisions made	Post-meeting – double check for corrections and errors
3	Post-meeting – start from the beginning of the meeting and manually populate each decision on each item	Prepare draft minutes and posted automatically through eSolutions meeting calendar
4	Manually populate an amendment to a motion and insert resolution numbers	
5	Prepare draft minutes	
6	Send minutes to staff for posting	

As you can see, there are several additional steps required by staff to prepare agendas and minutes. The benefit of eSCRIBE and the use of Staff Reports WorkFlow Management for report writers is that there is version control for reports and an audit trail of what was changed, by whom and when.

With iCompass, reports were prepared, provided to the reviewer(s) in hard copy or through multiple emails, then amended by the report author, reprinted and redistributed to the reviewers and finally the CAO for final sign off. With the workflow through eSCRIBE, there is less room for human error and control of the report by the report author.

Additionally, once a report is approved (with an audit trail) the report is added to the agenda with one click. Whereas through iCompass, the report was made into a PDF, with page numbers added, attachments combined, then added to the agenda. eSCRIBE performs all these actions in one click. The Town of Cobourg attempted to use the iCompass workflow report writing process, but again this module proved to be more work and confusing for Staff that providing a hard copy of the report from the author to the final reviewer was the simple process, but it was inefficient.

Although iCompass provides sufficient services, there has been an increase in costs of approximately \$3,000 over the years with the upgrading of the system to what Cobourg's needs are and what were originally agreed to in the original signing of the contract agreement. For example, including movers and seconders through the agenda preparation process, the ability to develop minutes from the agenda, the ability to participate and vote electronically, staff reports workflow, and the Live-Streaming of Council Meetings. Unable to solve the challenges with the existing product, staff realized that there is a need to change systems. When we looked at eSCRIBE, staff were pleased to discover that they already had what we needed, and all of these items were costly additions to the iCompass service.

eSCRIBE manages and stores information in various sites within Canada, which helps safeguard our archived meetings. It also provides for a more interactive interface with supporting content, such as dynamic maps, videos, and provide links to external sources. The additional functionality of eSCRIBE will continue Council's trend in recent years of fostering community engagement with the governance process and encourage transparency in the decision-making process.

The Municipal Clerk, has approached eSCRIBE, and agreed that the eSCRIBE Transparency Bundle was the best fit for Cobourg based on current practices, which includes modules for meeting management, report management, a participant portal, Internet publishing, and most notably for their location and their comprehensive digital strategic, which is in line with the Towns shift with our new Records Management Program to the future of Municipal Records Modernization.

The following is an outline of the modules included within the eSCRIBE System.

Meeting Manager

Meeting Manager, optimizes the creation of agendas, minutes and action lists while providing a flexible platform for adding further eSCRIBE functionality. Meeting Manager streamlines and automates tasks before, during, and after meetings, with customizable templates and user configurable workflows that allow for tailoring the system as needed.

Participant (Council Member) Portal

The Participant Portal provides elected officials with security-controlled access to meeting related information. Participants can browse upcoming meeting agendas and related reports; Download materials for offline review; Record comments, create follow-up notes and tasks; As well as search previous meetings.

Internet Publishing Plus

Helping drive greater transparency, the Internet Publishing Plus module will enable greater stakeholder engagement through the Town's existing website. Its WCAG 2.1 compliant design fully supports evolving accessibility requirements (AODA), while allowing content to be viewed optimally on any device. Content can be published with as little as one click, while integration with the future webcasting will include automated indexing and linking of video.

Webcasting Lite

Webcasting Lite provides a simple and cost-effective web streaming experience through YouTube to capture real-time and archival video from your council or boardrooms and streaming it live online through your website. The current way that Council Meetings are streamed and viewed by the public would remain unchanged.

Virtual Meeting Capabilities

Recent amendments to the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* now permit members of councils, local boards and committees at quorum to participate in open and closed meetings electronically during either a municipal or a provincial emergency. This has allowed for the ongoing business of municipal Council to continue without the need to meet in person, particularly given the requirements of physical distancing to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In response to the current new norm of physical distancing and virtual meetings eSCRIBE has a digital meeting management solution that could be looked at pending Council's decision of continuing meeting electronically, resuming physical meetings, or creating a hybrid model for the future. If Council were to return to in-person Council meetings within the current Council Chambers there would need to be an arrangement of physical desks to keep in line with physical distancing protocols with all of Council, Staff and member of the public attendance.

Unlike iCompass, eSCRIBE as a digital plan in place if needed which would allow for a hybrid model of Council Meetings through a combination of in-person and virtual attendance to still effectively manage Council meetings and all attendee in a efficient process.

Webcasting Plus

Bolstering transparency while simplifying web video workflows, Webcasting Plus provides a manageable solution for capturing archival video from council chambers and streaming it live online. (capacity of hybrid model). Featuring unlimited storage and live streaming of audio and video, the module is combined with Internet Publishing Plus to automatically index media with the meeting's agenda and minutes for both live and archived web viewing. If The Town of Cobourg would like the ability to livestream their council meetings directly on the Town's website as opposed to YouTube, whether they are in person or virtually, eSCRIBE has made available the Webcasting Plus option for the Town of Cobourg to consider. Attached to this report is the eSCRIBE Guide to the new norm for successful civic meetings.



Another advantage to Webcasting Plus is that the Town of Cobourg retains the rights to all Videos and archived videos that are streamed live and recorded which are stored within Canada. Currently through the YouTube model, the American company retains the rights to all our videos and they can use them as they wish and they are stored in an American cloud system.

Additional Benefits:

Utilization of Existing E-solutions Website:

With the introduction of the eSCRIBE Meeting Management Solution, the Town will no longer have two (2) separate websites. All Council Meetings and information related to the official records of meetings of Council including by-laws resolutions and minutes would be published and maintained on the Town of Cobourg Website only, there would be no need to transfer back and forth by Council, Staff and the public, resulting in Council Meetings becoming more transparent to the public and citizens of Cobourg. Council and Committee Meetings notices and published agendas would be automatically combined within the current Cobourg Website Calendar eliminating the duplication of calendars from two (2) different sites, further reducing the duplication of Staff time to manage to calendars and providing information on two (2) different websites.

Existing eSCRIBE Customers:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peel Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mississauga ○ Brampton ○ Caledon • York Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Markham ○ Vaughan ○ Richmond Hill ○ Aurora ○ Newmarket ○ Georgina • Niagara Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thorold ○ Lincoln ○ West Lincoln ○ Pelham ○ Port Colbourne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarington • Sault Ste. Marie • Peterborough • Uxbridge • UC – Prescott and Russell • Carlton Place • Smith Falls • Sudbury • Guelph • Hamilton • Burlington • Cambridge • Township of Cramahe • Haldimand County
--	--

Implementation Process:

The eSCRIBE implementation plan is formulated with consultation between the Town of Cobourg and the eSCRIBE Implementation Consultant upon the finalization of the agreement.

Below is a sample implementation schedule and may change depending on the modules selected and draft timelines.

Phase 1

Stage	Description	Target Date (Tentative with Council Approval)
1	Project Kick-Off – Agreement Signed	July 24, 2020 Week One
2	Pre-Configuration – Meeting User and process information	Week 2
3	Configure eScribe Settings	Week 3-4
4	User Adoption – train and transition users to eScribe	Week 5-9
5	Live Meeting – first fully live meeting conducted using eScribe	Week 10

Phase 2

Stage	Description	Target Date
6	eScribe and Town assist with the roll out plan with other areas in the organization	October 1, 2020 Week 11 +
7	Roll-out complete, eScribe fully operational.	

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/STAFFING/BUDGET IMPACT

The current budget for the iCompass Meeting Management System is \$5,600.00 for the Video Live Streaming function, and \$5,000.00 for the ICompass Meeting Management System for a total budget amount in 2020 of \$10,600.00.

Currently the Town of Cobourg has paid from July 2019 to July 2020 in the amount of \$11,616.40. The Town has just been invoiced for 11,964.89 for July 2020 to July 2021. If the switch is made to eSCRIBE that Town would provide 60 days' notice to iCompass and pay only what is remaining from July 2020 to October 1, 2020.

The initial cost of acquisition of the eSCRIBE system is \$10,000 plus HST and excluding the onetime \$1,000 set up and training fee. After the initial from start of implementation of ESCRIBE the annual fee for the three (3) year term will be \$10,000 yearly with a 3% increase each year. This is still approximately \$2,000 in savings then the current system.

Three Year Contract	eSCRIBE
Year 1	\$11,300
Year 2	\$10,300
Year 3	\$10,609

In addition to the main proposal costs there are some additional functions and advancements that eSCRIBE provides and can implement related to the agenda meeting management software such as:

- eSCRIBE Vote Manager & Request to Speak Mgmt
- eSCRIBE Public Comments & Delegation Request Mgmt
- eSCRIBE Approval Manager
- eSCRIBE Board Manager
- eSCRIBE Single Sign-on Modality for ADFS/Azure AD
- eSCRIBE eSolutions Connector (eSolutions may charge fees)

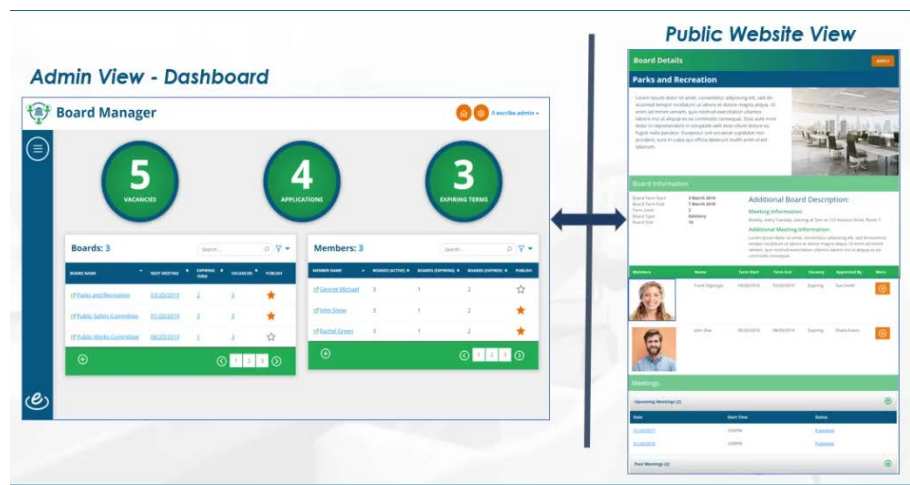
- eSCRIBE Laserfiche Connector
- eSCRIBE Notarius Connector

Below is a summary of the modules that the Legislative Services Department could benefit from with adding to the eSCRIBE System that would greatly improve meeting management and department efficiency.

1. eScribe Board Manager Module:

Fully integrated with eSCRIBE's comprehensive meeting management suite, Board Manager would allow the Town to easily manage and publish Advisory Committee and Local Board Agendas and members' details – in addition to vacancy applications and appointments – through an intuitive, responsive interface. In addition, the Board Manager associates committees with their corresponding meetings and attendees to provide efficient, end-to-end workflow support before, during and after each meeting.

Currently the Town utilizes iCompass to create and publish Advisory Committee and Local Board meeting agendas and minutes as well as coordinates with Communications Department to post and create Member Vacancies. With this module, there would be the enhanced ability to effectively manage and make Advisory Committees and other Local Boards more transparent and connected with the public and Council Members would see an increased efficiency in the way Committee Meetings are currently being operated. This module would allow the Town to manage Committees and Boards in one convenient online location and would allow the public to apply to Committees through the online website eliminating all paper applications. This module would also allow staff to easily track member appointments and track expiry dates automatically and not through a manual procedure which would greatly reduce staff time and eliminate any human error and provide up to date information to Council Members.



The additional cost for this module would be \$2,800, with an annual cost of \$1,450.

The Municipal Clerk is recommending that the Council direct Staff to implement this module in order to effectively manage the Town of Cobourg Advisory Committees. Funding for this update has not been budgeted, but if Council sees this as an increased efficiency then the funding could come from the remaining Building efficiencies funding in the amount of \$2,800.

2. eSCRIBE Public Comments and Delegation Request Mgmt

The Delegation Request Management (DRM) Module would allow the Town to efficiently manage citizen requests to speak at Council Meetings and Advisory Committee Meetings through an online form through the Town's Website. Currently this process is done through email directly to the Municipal Clerk which is time consuming and on occasion confusing for the delegate to research and find out how to register and who to start the process with. Through this module, citizens and organizations wishing to speak to Council can do so directly through the Council meeting Agenda.

The Public Comments portion of this module would allow for Council to receive comments from citizens before, during and/or after meetings which would add another level of engaging the public. This component of the module would be beneficial for the Open Forum Section of the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda, especially during the current virtual meeting set-up. Currently the Clerk monitors email prior to the start of the meeting in order to be sure that those wishing to comment during the Open Forum that they will be heard if they meet the timelines. If this module is in place it would make it easier on Staff and the public if they are wish to discuss or comment on a particular agenda item. If Council were to use this module in an alternative way, there would need to be amendments made to the current Procedural By-law for its use.



The additional cost for this module would be \$2,125, with an annual cost of \$1,450.

The Municipal Clerk is recommending that the Council direct Staff to implement this module in order to effectively manage Delegations and Public Comments prior, during and after Council and Advisory Committee Meetings. Funding for this update has not been budgeted, but if Council sees this as an increased efficiency then the funding could come from the remaining Building efficiencies funding in the amount of \$2,125.

Three Year Contract	eSCRIBE	eSCRIBE (\$ with additions)
Year 1	\$11,300	\$15,925 (\$12,900 for additional Modules + \$3,025 for one-time training an set-up)
Year 2	\$10,300	\$13,287
Year 3	\$10,609	\$13,685

Webcasting Plus:

Note (from page 7-8 Webcasting Plus): If Council decides to implement Webcasting plus, eSCRIBE is willing to provide both of these additional modules (Board Manager and Public Comment/Delegation Mgmt module) for free and a reduced rate for the Webcasting at \$9,000 each year for the three (3) year term.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Town of Cobourg and the Legislative Services Department is committed to continually meeting and/or exceeding expectations in terms of openness and transparency measures relating to the *Municipal Act* and is requesting council's support in switching from iCompass to eSCRIBE for our agenda management software with the addition of the new recommended modules in order to increase efficiencies and effectiveness of open, transparent and accessible local government pursuant Council's strategic plan and vision and mission statement.

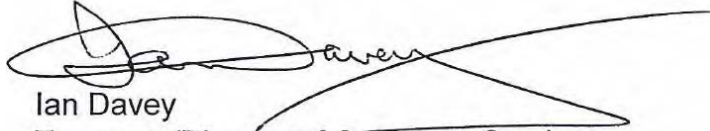
Municipal Council Mission

The Town of Cobourg is committed to open and accountable governance and the provision of quality, accessible programs and services in a sustainable manner.

9.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT (SENIOR MANAGEMENT/CAO)



Brent Larmer
Municipal Clerk
Manager of Legislative Services



Ian Davey
Treasurer/Director of Corporate Services