

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

REPORT CLK-2024-14
October 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Training – Council Chamber Audio/Visual System

AUTHOR: Tara Stephens, Director of Legislative Services/City Clerk

APPROVING: Rob Axiak, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE GENERAL COMMITTEE receives the training on the upgrades for the Council Chamber audio/visual system, which includes enhanced public viewing, streamlined voting procedures, meeting workflows, and integration of new technology features for improved governance and public engagement.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This recommendation is aligned with Council’s strategic priority of ensuring “**Liveability**” by creating a sense of belonging while enhancing mobility by improving access to recreation and community events, ensuring adequate housing options, encouraging job growth, and improving ways to efficiently move people throughout the city.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report outlines the training for the updated audio/visual (AV) system in Council Chambers, which is set to take place during the General Committee meeting on October 22, 2024. The training will focus on enhancing public access to council proceedings, streamlining voting procedures, and improving workflow during meetings. These upgrades aim to promote good governance and increase transparency and efficiency of public meetings held in council chambers.

BACKGROUND:

Council Chamber upgrades commenced in August 2024, as part of routine maintenance to enhance the overall meeting experience and address accessibility. The existing AV system had also reached end-of-life, which also prompted this system upgrade. To support this system upgrade and improve accessibility, acoustic panels and sound dampening carpet was installed.

The training provided to council at the General Committee on will introduce council members and staff to the new AV features, particularly focusing on public access, voting efficiency, and improved meeting management during transitions and closed sessions.

DISCUSSION:

On October 22, 2024, the Director of Legislative Services/City Clerk and representatives from AV Labs will lead a detailed training session on the upgraded audio/visual (AV) system for members of council. The session will cover key features and functionality. To ensure all members of council have the required training, participation at this meeting (virtual or in-person) is highly encouraged. A good portion of this general committee meeting will be reserved to ensure all members of council receive the training and information they need related to the system. The goal is to ensure everyone is well-prepared to use the enhanced system for more efficient meetings and better public engagement.

Key features of the AV system upgrades include:

- **Enhanced Public Viewing of Delegations:** The new AV system improves audio and visual clarity, allowing members of the public to engage more effectively with council proceedings and follow discussions with ease.
- **Streamlined Voting Procedures:** The upgrade introduces more efficient voting mechanisms, reducing the time taken for decisions and enhancing the transparency of the voting process.
- **Improved Technology Workflows:** The upgraded AV system is designed to facilitate smoother transitions between agenda items, manage recesses more effectively, and streamline procedures for closed sessions, ensuring that council meetings run efficiently and cohesively.
- **eScribe Capabilities:** Integration with the eScribe platform will enhance meeting management, allowing for better organization and accessibility of meeting agendas and documents. All council members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the eScribe app in advance to maximize the benefits of the new system. This integration will be implemented in January 2025.
- **Meeting Access Information:**
 - When council members attend meetings in person, their participation rights and permissions are automatically associated with their in-person attendance. As a result, council members do not need to log into the meeting virtually, as their identity and participation are recognized based on their physical presence.

- Council members attending virtually will no longer need to use the Zoom platform, regardless of whether they are participating in-person or online. Instead, a meeting link will be provided 30 minutes before the start of the meeting through the AV system. This change aims to simplify access and improve connectivity for all members.
- **24/7 System Monitoring:** This feature will allow for continuous oversight of the AV system, ensuring any technical issues can be addressed promptly and minimize disruptions during meetings.

FINANCIAL:

The AV system project costs total \$55,651.56 + HST and is funded through capital projects:

- 10-111-19510- Audio/Visual Equipment - Council Chambers
- 10-430-20090- Council Chambers - Phase 3 of 3
- 10-131-22000- New Technology/ Licensing
- 10-131-23000- New Technology/ Licensing

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the training session is intended to prepare council members to utilize the upgraded audio/visual system effectively. These enhancements streamline council meetings and improve public engagement, promoting transparency and good governance. By adopting these new technologies, the council is better equipped to serve the community and foster a more accessible meeting environment.

ATTACHMENT:

Appendix I - Virtual Participation – How to Join a Meeting