

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT: Options for live video streaming of City Council meetings.

SUMMARY: Interest has been expressed in live video streaming of council meetings so that the public can view the meeting proceedings. Attached is a “Good, Better, Best” table that provides a brief summary of the types of systems available. Costs and features vary widely. For example, ongoing monthly costs for a simple system are about \$200/month and up to \$1,200/month for a system with more features and customer support. Equipment costs also range from about \$1,000 for a simple camera, mounting brackets, cabling, software and staff time for setup, to more than \$30,000 for multiple cameras, lights, sound and video mixer, software, mounting brackets and staff time for setup and production support.

**FISCAL
IMPACT:** None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is looking for direction from council as to the type of video streaming system desired and the accompanying level of service.

MOTION RECOMMENDED:

“I move to direct staff to further research specific video streaming systems that meet the specifications of the attached “**Good**” category.”

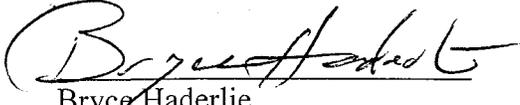
Or

“I move to direct staff to further research specific video streaming systems that meet the specifications of the attached “**Better**” category.”

Or

“I move to direct staff to further research specific video streaming systems that meet the specifications of the attached “**Best**” category.”

Prepared



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Council Chambers Video System Considerations

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Below is some basic information to help council members provide direction to staff as to the type of video streaming system they would like. The information has been gathered from other cities that stream council meetings, as well as from online research. There are many different options and levels available that range in price and features. This information is intended to generate discussion. Once direction is provided, staff will bring back recommendations along with specific pricing.

	Good	Better	Best
Description of System	A single camera at the back of the chambers that is focused on the front of the chambers with a live audio feed to accompany. Live streaming of the meeting with no anticipated backup.	Up to four views on a single screen (like a security camera system) with two cameras focusing on the Council and staff seating, one focused on the podium, and the final screen for PowerPoint presentations.	Multiple cameras and lighting to enhance video quality. Marking the recording to allow viewers to select the agenda item they desire. Other electronic tagging to enhance viewer use. Recording edited to show who is speaking, PowerPoint presentations, and other activities in the chambers.
Access to Data	Live stream only and/or short-term access to meeting video.	Live streaming and archived for public access.	Live streaming and recorded (with markings/indexing) for public access.
Technician Requirements	Low – Ensure that system is operational during meeting and is accessible over the city website.	Moderate – Ensure that the system is operational during the meeting and that files are properly stored for later viewing and accessible via the City website.	High – Depending on system requirements, staff demand could range from one person to multiple people. This would include staff at the meeting to run the recording equipment and cameras, as well as staff to edit and index the recording.
IT/System Requirements	Low – Ensure that there is adequate bandwidth on the city system to allow for live streaming. <i>Note: As viewership increases, so do bandwidth requirements.</i>	Moderate – Could require storage capacity on the city system, although companies in the moderate plan range offer hosting services as well. Ensure adequate bandwidth for live viewing.	High – Internal system demands as well as the possibility of offsite hosting will depend on vendor proposals. Equipment would likely be needed for the editing and recording process. Adequate bandwidth for live viewing.

Estimated Cost	\$1,000 for camera, cabling, mounting brackets, software and setup. Monthly cost of about \$200 to stream.	\$5,000 for cameras, cabling, mounting brackets, software and setup. Monthly costs range from \$99 to \$999 depending on viewership and storage needs.	\$20,000 to 30,000 for cameras, cabling, mounting brackets, video sound mixer, etc. Some vendors charge for an encoder, which ranges from a one-time cost of \$3,500- \$4,500. Monthly costs range from \$650/month to \$1,200/month for hosting, customer support, indexing.
Staff Time	Initial setup and then one person (probably the city clerk or deputy) can set it to stream.	Initial setup and then one to two people at every meeting.	Initial setup and then one to three people at every meeting, depending on equipment.
Pros	Low staff involvement and need for outside resources or budget. Anticipated that modifying the file is not possible.	Allows immediate and delayed viewing of the meeting. Moderate cost for the system and relatively low staff involvement.	Detailed access to the video as needed by the viewer. High quality video and sound to provide for evidence of meeting proceedings in the future. Transparency of government activities in a public meeting would be enhanced.
Cons	Limited view from one camera angle. No indexing. Can't be viewed at a later date	Would likely not have detailed marking (indexing) of the recording so viewers will need to start at the beginning and proceed through the recording to the desired location.	Cost is much higher than other systems. Higher staff involvement and technical requirements than other systems. Could create challenges in legal proceedings when the video and audio recordings could conflict with written minutes. Anticipation of public for good or bad.