

City of Belleville

Report No: CC-2025-11

Meeting Date: August 25, 2025



To: Mayor and Members of Council

Department: Corporate Services

Staff Contact: Doug Irwin, City Clerk

Subject: Electronic Voting at Council Meetings

Recommendation:

That the City Clerk's Report No. CC-2025-11 Electronic Voting at Council Meetings be received.

Background:

At the May 26, 2025 Council meeting, Councillor Carr requested a staff report outlining the reasons for the delay in the implementation of electronic voting and an implementation plan for same, which was approved as part of the Council Chamber Modernization project.

The 2020 Capital Budget included \$20,000 for Item No. 1.061 - Council Electronic Voting System. This initiative was later combined with the Council Chambers Modernization Project, which was completed in 2022.

The City implemented iCompass Meeting Manager Pro for the creation of staff reports, meeting agendas and minutes, and a Meeting Portal to enable individuals to view the various meeting agendas and minutes, as well as subscribe to various meeting types to be notified when agendas and minutes are posted.

In addition, the City implemented iCompass Video Manager to livestream open session Council meetings. Since January 2025, the City has been timestamping the Council meeting videos, after the meeting, to enable an individual to jump to a specific agenda item while watching the video through the Meeting Portal by selecting the Video button on the particular agenda, and clicking on the camera icon beside an agenda item.

Financial/Analysis:

The iCompass solution was implemented in 2021-2022. At the time of the implementation, Council were provided iPads to access the electronic agendas, and the Agenda Notes feature in iCompass.

The \$20,000 Capital Budget item funded the purchase of the iPads for Council.

iCompass Meeting Manager Pro does provide the ability to vote electronically.

In order to utilize the electronic voting in iCompass:

- Members must be logged into iCompass and have the Splitscreen/HTML agenda on their device or have the Agenda Notes iPad app open
- A dedicated staff member needs to be actively working in the Minutes and note the Mover and Secunder of each resolution
- After noting the Mover and Secunder the staff member would send the resolution for a vote
- Voting members would receive a Voting Pop-up while they view their agenda
- Each member would select their vote - For, Against or Abstain
- After the voting is complete, a second Pop-up would appear which would display the voting results, with each member's name under their vote choice
- The process is repeated until all voting is completed for the meeting

Process Changes Required to Implement Electronic Voting using iCompass

- All members would need to switch from a paper agenda to an electronic agenda and sign into iCompass
- Each member would be required to cast their vote by selecting the options in the Voting Pop-up
- Every vote would become a recorded vote
- A dedicated staff member would need to be actively working in the Minutes and noting the Mover and Secunder of each resolution, and sending each resolution for voting
- In the event of an amendment to a resolution, the dedicated staff member would need to be prepared to update resolutions in real-time before the resolution could be sent for voting
- In the event of a new resolution that is not included on the agenda cover pages, the dedicated staff member would need to prepare the resolution in real-time before the resolution could be sent for voting
- Updates to the Procedural By-law would be required with respect to voting and the manner in which it is conducted

While iCompass is capable of providing electronic voting, it would be a significant change in the way the Council meetings are conducted:

- Only electronic agendas would used
- Members would need to be signed into iCompass during the meeting, and select their vote when they receive a Voting Pop-up

- With the possible amendment or addition of resolutions, members would need to wait until the dedicated staff member has input the information into iCompass before the resolution could be sent for a vote
- Utilizing the electronic voting through iCompass would increase the amount of time that is required for voting on each resolution, as well as the time required for amending or adding resolutions

Alternative Method to Implement Electronic Voting

During the Council Chambers Modernization Project, the audio-visual (AV) system in the Council Chambers was not updated. The current AV system is limited in its functionality, requires significant staff interaction and is approaching end-of-life. An updated AV system could offer increased functionality, including:

- an enhanced video stream, with multiple cameras, that could automatically follow the active microphones
- display each individual as their microphone is active
- display names and titles of Members of Council and staff
- electronic voting through the microphone system
- establish a queue to speak to a matter by the member pressing a button on their microphone
- assist the Chair in advancing through the queue of the members that wish to speak
- desktop monitors for Council to view presentations
- ability to remotely turn on/off microphones if someone forgets
- ability for hybrid participation during meetings by Deputations, Members of Council, or staff
- provide overlay slides advising that the Meeting will start shortly, Meeting has adjourned, In Closed Session (In-camera)

Additionally to implement the changes required to make electronic voting a viable practical tool for use by Council in the event that is the direction chosen, a 2026 Capital Budget Issue has been prepared with an associated cost of \$250,000.

Conclusion:

Implementing electronic voting via iCompass is impractical given the current manner in which Council meetings are conducted. Acquiring and implementing a new AV system could facilitate the integration of electronic voting through a new microphone system.

Reviewed by:

Marc Coyle, Director of Information Technology
 Brianne MacNevin, Manager of Finance/Deputy Treasurer
 Marie Doherty, Director, People and Corporate Services
 Matt MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

Status:

Approved - 18 Aug 2025
 Approved - 18 Aug 2025
 Approved - 19 Aug 2025
 Approved - 21 Aug 2025