Strathcona
REGIONAL DISTRICT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 16, 2020   **FILE:** 0550-04 Board

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional Board

FROM: Dave Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: AGENDA SOFTWARE – OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

PURPOSE/PROBLEM

To consider the status of the software application currently used by the Regional District for producing Board and committee agendas and minutes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional District currently produces its meeting agendas and minutes utilizing a software application that was originally developed in-house by the Comox-Strathcona Regional District several years ago. This legacy application's design and platform are end-of-life and currently present a security risk to the SRD.

BACKGROUND / HISTORY

In 2017, a network penetration test was conducted against the SRD's network by Digital Boundary Group (DBG). The results from this investigation uncovered several security issues that required mitigation. Although a full web application penetration test was outside of the scope of this initial engagement, the legacy electronic agenda software raised several red flags and it was recommended to do a further 'deep-dive' into this application.

In 2018, the IT team conducted a full web application penetration test against the electronic agenda software. The results of this test uncovered several critical security issues and validated the web application does not meet the baseline cyber security standards recommended by the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security. DBG's recommendation was to take this web-facing application offline immediately until the security risks could be addressed.

Since then staff have been looking into various options for resolving the issues identified.

Option 1: Migrate to a new platform. Re-develop and relocate our current system to a secure environment while retaining existing functionality.

Option 2: Develop a new system. Essentially the same as Option 1 but with improved functionality and efficiency.

Option 3: Subscribe to an existing commercial service. Request proposals from the marketplace to determine if an acceptable electronic system exists that provides all of the required functionality.

Option 4: Revert to a paper-based system. Not recommended as this would increase overall costs, reduce efficiency and negate much of the work done in the past to improve access by directors and the public.

Option 5: Retain current system platform. Not recommended as issues over security and stability would remain.

Since the costs and functionality associated with Options 1, 2 and 3 have not yet been fully identified staff are not prepared to recommend a preferred approach at this time. It is anticipated that sufficient information may be available prior to finalization of the 2021-2025 financial plan at which time a further report can be prepared for the Board's consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.

Respectfully:
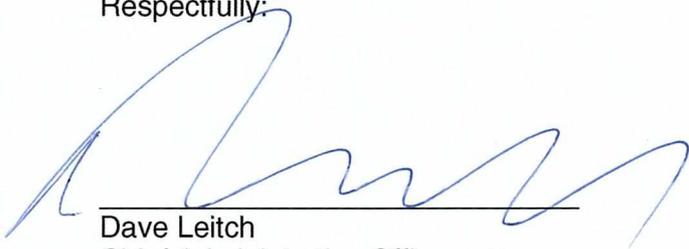
Dave Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

Option	Advantages and Disadvantages	Preliminary Cost Estimate
Option 1	-Platform would meet current security and stability standards. -Little opportunity to improve functionality and efficiency.	$ TBD
Option 2	-Opportunity to improve functionality and efficiency. -Costs unknown but could be prohibitive.	$ TBD
Option 3	-Inability to retain features needed by SRD but not offered by commercial product. -Short-term costs generally lower but long-term costs may be higher. - Loss of control over down time or system availability.	$ TBD
Option 4	-Additional cost impacts for agenda production and distribution. -Increased time requirements for agenda production and distribution. -Loss of access to agendas by public. -Decreased ease of access by directors.	$ TBD
Option 5	-Data is susceptible to corruption by unauthorized parties. -Security of confidential information is compromised.	$ TBD

Prepared by: Tom Yates, Corporate Services Manager