
Subject: Use of Committee Room 4 for Regional Council Ante Room

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, March 28, 2019

Recommendations

That Regional Council **APPROVE** the use of the Council Chamber for Standing Committee and Council meetings that are closed to the public.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction with respect to the use of Committee Room 4 for meetings that are not open to the public.
- In July 2018, Regional Council approved the use of Committee Room 4 to hold meetings that are closed to the public. After utilizing the room for some Committee and Council meetings it was found there were concerns using the room due to its size and the lack of adequate infrastructure to facilitate a proper meeting.
- Staff have provided options with respect to the room layout; however, it is suggested that Council provide direction as to whether the Council Chamber should continue to be used for meetings that are not open to the public or Committee Room 4 be renovated for use as ante room.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations should the Council Chamber continue to be used for meetings closed to the public as the equipment necessary to facilitate this is already in place.

Should Council want to proceed with using Committee Room 4 as an ante room for meetings not open to the public, staff would be required to find a funding source for this project as one has not been identified. As funding has not been allocated for this project, staff would need to re-prioritize previously approved capital project to fund this project.

Analysis

At its meeting held on July 5, 2018, Regional Council approved the use of Committee Room 4 to hold meetings of Committee and Council that are not open to the public. This action was undertaken to ensure the confidentiality of closed meetings of Committee and Council and to allow the public to remain in the Council Chamber. After utilizing Committee Room 4 for closed session meetings, it was noted that not all Councillors are

able to sit around the table in Committee Room 4, line of sight was problematic and there were difficulties in being able to hear members.

On January 17, 2019, Regional Council approved holding meetings not open to the public in the Council Chamber until staff could provide a report outlining options to implement the functionality required to facilitate meetings that are closed to the public in Committee Room 4.

To date, Committee and Council meetings that are closed to the public have been held in the Council Chamber. The Council Chamber is equipped with the capability to record closed sessions and Clerk's staff have been recording closed session meetings in accordance with Council's direction at its special meeting held on July 26, 2018.

Staff have provided four room layout options for Council to consider. Due to the size of the room, limited options were available to accommodate a table that would seat approximately 35 people.

Options 1 through 3 provide for the room to be equipped with a large table to accommodate approximately 35 people. The costs for Options 1 through 3 range from \$370,000 to \$416,400 approximately. After reviewing these options presented for the new configuration of Committee Room 4 options 1 through 3 are not in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* or the Facility Accessibility Design Standards as they do not allow for sufficient clear passage around the table of a minimum of 1100mm. These options are not being recommended by staff.

Option 4 provides for a renovation of Committee Room 4. The renovation would include the moving of the north wall in Committee Room 4 into the Human Resources area to facilitate minimum clear Accessible Route of 1100mm, (FADS 4.1.4). This would require the relocation of some offices within the Human Resources area. The cost to undertake Option 4 is approximately \$553,111.39 net. This amount includes the audiovisual hardware and equipment that would be required including a tie-in of that equipment to the equipment in the Council Chamber. Should Council choose to move forward with Option 4, Committee Room 4 would be unavailable for use for approximately eight weeks.

Council should also be mindful of the governance review being undertaken by the Province which may decrease the size of Regional Council which would allow Committee Room 4 to be used for meetings not open to the public in the same configuration as it is currently.

Alternatives Reviewed

Council may decide to undertake a renovation of Committee Room 4 to facilitate its use as an ante room for Committee and Council meetings that are not open to the public.

As noted funding has not been identified for this project and would require a re-prioritization of previously approved capital projects.

Council may decide to use Committee Room 4 as ante room despite the physical and technical limitations that have been noted.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The improvements to Committee Room 4 are aligned with the Council Strategic Priorities via the theme of “Customer Service”.

Other Pertinent Reports

CLK 02-2019 Regional Council Ante Room

CAO 13-2018 REVISED – Update on CAO 05-2018 – Improving the Business of Council

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Committee Room 4 Proposed Layouts and Cost	5
Appendix 2	Committee Room 4 Total Cost Breakdown	13