



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE


SUBJECT: 2014-2018 COUNCIL TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

WARD: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: FRANK BARBARO, SERVICE DESK SUPERVISOR EXTENSION #4708 

SUBMITTED BY: CAROLYN GLASER, IT DIRECTOR 

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: RHONDA BUNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INNOVATE BARRIE 

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: CARLA LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the technology services as described in Appendix 'A' to Staff Report IT002-14 be adopted for the 2014 -2018 Council term.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

2. Technology hardware, software and related support services are provisioned to members of Council each term by the City to ensure they are supported with electronic tools to sufficiently execute their duties.
3. On November 1, 2010, City Council adopted motion 10-A-441 regarding Staff Report ICT003-10 which identified the technology hardware, software and service level standards provisioned to members of the 2010-2014 term of Barrie City Council. The particulars of the technology are listed below.

"A technology allowance of \$5000 would be provided to each member of Council, over the 4 year term. IT would assume responsibility for ensuring that technology provided complies with corporate standards, technology platforms and practices. \$5000 allowance could be allocated, in total, to any combination of any of the following items:

- a) IT approved laptop enabled with 3G Internet connectivity, Microsoft Office productivity suite and access to City web-mail account
 - b) IT approved Blackberry or cell phone enabled through the City of Barrie Blackberry server. Would include deployment of mobile technology for City extension phone service.
 - c) Data costs associated with laptop 3G and Blackberry/cell phone usage (approximately \$1500 per Councillor over 4 year term)
 - d) Automatic escalation of support tickets submitted to City of Barrie Helpdesk, including requests for new technology items. Staff will return Council's initial call within 1 hour and at that time provide an estimate of time to resolve problem. Support costs will be tracked by IT staff and allocated to Councillor's accounts for their review and approval.
 - e) Cost per page for usage of shared multi-function printer.
 - f) Any other hardware or software item as requested and approved IT staff."
4. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the hardware, software and service level standards recommended for provision to members of the 2014-2018 term of Barrie City Council by the Information Technology Department.

Analysis

5. Members of Council typically require the following technology services in the delivery of their duties as elected officials. These services need to be provisioned in a mobile and/or office environment – pending the preferences of each Council member.
 - a) Ability to communicate by voice, email, text, messaging and other social media forums
 - b) Use of a computer equipped with standard office productivity tools
 - c) Access to the internet
 - d) Access to committee and council documents and materials
 - e) Ability to print/scan/fax/photocopy
 - f) Technical support for the technology services provisioned, and
 - g) Tracking and reporting of costs, as per the provisions of the Municipal Act.

6. Staff considered the following issues when identifying tools and standards that should be applied regarding the hardware, software and service levels provided to members of the 2014-2018 City Council:
 - a) Council and staff feedback regarding the technology deployed during the 2010-2014 term
 - b) Corporate technology platforms
 - c) Alternate technology options
 - d) Electronic online services

Technology Services During the 2010-2014 Council Term

7. Members of the 2010-2014 Council provided some feedback to IT staff regarding their use of the technology equipment over the 4 year term. This feedback, including observations from support staff is summarized as follows:
 - Laptop was not a useful tool for all Members – some found it cumbersome and would have preferred the use of something smaller to address their mobility needs, another member returned it as it was found to not be needed due to their access to other computing devices
 - 3G internet connectivity on the laptops was provisioned through USB air cards – for some Members, air cards were cumbersome to use and did not provide consistent performance accessing the internet
 - Blackberry device was not the preferred smart phone for some Members
 - Several Members used other products, such as iPads for their personal/non-Council work
 - The \$5000 technology allowance was insufficient to support the communication needs of some Members – since the Municipal Act requires a minimum annual reporting of the benefits and expenses of each Council member during their term of office, an allowance approach may place unnecessary constraints on Members in performing their duties
 - Access to an internal portal space – InSite was challenging for Members due to access and performance issues
 - More education and information was needed on a regular basis to ensure Members had up to date costing on cellular/data rates when outside the country

Corporate Technology Platforms and Standards

8. Technology provided to members of Council should be consistent with existing corporate technology platforms and adhere to existing security practices and policies. This minimizes costs, facilitates timely and efficient support and ensures compatibility with other corporate technology infrastructure and security protocols.

9. The City of Barrie network and computers operate in a Microsoft Windows server and desktop environment – office suite. Therefore technology provided to members of Council will be Microsoft compatible and compliant. This will also extend to web filters, anti-virus software, and data encryption on mobile devices to further ensure compliance with City protocols.
10. The City's computing environment is standardized on the PC platform, through an existing leasing agreement with 3rd party vendors – Compu-Solve and Hewlett Packard Financial Services (HPFS). It is recommended that the computing devices issued to Council be acquired through the City's existing computer leasing arrangement to secure established pricing, warranty and technical support for the computers.
11. The City deploys smartphones and cellular phones through corporately contracted data, cellular and device service agreements. Blackberry smartphones are deployed exclusively by the Corporation at this time. Technology infrastructure currently exists at the City to manage these devices and ensure email transmission is secured with encryption. Cell phone models vary pending job requirements of the user.

Alternate Technology Options

12. Notwithstanding the City's existing technology platforms and standards, alternate hardware options can be supported by the corporation's technology infrastructure. From a computing perspective, use of alternate hardware platforms beyond HP laptops and tablets (through the City's current lease arrangements) would result in cost increases for the purchase and support of new hardware devices by staff. From a smartphone perspective, the City's current data, cellular and device contracts already offer several different device options through its corporate plan. Internal support costs for non-Blackberry smartphones would increase.

Electronic Online Services

12. City staff successfully manage and maintain all committee and council agendas, minutes and meetings through an electronic agenda application, accessed via <http://barrie.legistar.com>. This on-line service features full text search of legislation, staff reports, by-law status, dates, actions, and attachments. Through the Legislative Information Portal, both Council and the public are able to view records from 2002 to present for each meeting of City Council and its Standing Committee (General Committee), Reference and Advisory Committees, as well as the Circulation List, which contains memorandums and correspondence including agendas, minutes and other supporting documents. Having access to this on a mobile device would allow Members of Council to be paperless at Council and Committee meetings.
13. The electronic agenda application (Legistar) also has an iPad app - iLegislate. As well as enabling direct access to documents online, this app also allows an elected official to add notes and mark-ups, bookmark sections for review, send questions/comments for further information, and research items. The benefit of this app is to improve the use of electronic documents and streamline the meeting process.
14. Information sharing between staff and Council has been facilitated through the use of an internal portal – InSite. Due to access and performance issues with this space, staff are developing a new approach for online document sharing for Council that supports a mobile environment, enabling group and individual accesses to secured online data storage.

Recommended Technology Services

15. Given the information provided in the preceding paragraphs, the following technology services – summarized in Appendix "A" are recommended for the 2014-2018 term of Council:

- a) Voice communications - Members of Council would be issued a smart phone OR cell phone – based on their preference and the device options available through the City's contracted vendor.
- i) For City Councillors, this would be the primary device used for voice communications. A dedicated four-digit extension will be assigned to each Councillor for constituents to reach them directly. The City phone system will be programmed to automatically forward those calls to their mobile phone.
 - ii) For the Mayor, voice communications will be supported for both the office and mobile environment. A dedicated four-digit extension will be assigned to the Mayor for constituents to reach him/her directly. This extension will be programmed on a desk phone in the Mayor's office.

It is not recommended that personal mobile devices be used by Members for City business, as the corporation would be unable to secure corporate pricing rates and other group discounts.

- b) Computing hardware - staff propose each member of Council have the choice of receiving a laptop computer OR a tablet computer (with productivity jacket and keyboard). IT staff would acquire these devices and ensure that they are equipped with corporately deployed software to prepare and review documents.
- i) For City Councillors, this device would be in addition to the computers deployed and made available to them in the Councillors' office and lounge.
 - ii) For the Mayor, this device would be in addition to another computer deployed in the Mayor's office to support day-to-day office work.
- c) Internet access – laptop and tablet computing devices would be equipped with integrated Wi-Fi and LTE (cellular) network connectivity. This would provide Members with the ability to access any web-based service including a City-provided email account, online document sharing and access to the City's online Legistar system from anywhere in cellular range. Computing devices deployed in the Mayor's office and the Councillors' office and lounge will be connected via cable to the City's network infrastructure.
- d) Printing/Faxing/Copying - staff propose the continued use of the multi-function work-centre units installed in the Mayor's office and Councillors' office and lounge at City Hall.
- e) Technical support - staff propose the continued practice of Council Members calling in and/or submitting service tickets using the standard corporate service ticket system. Work will continue to be prioritized to ensure immediate attention is given to Council service tickets when required.
- f) Financial reporting – the expenses associated with each Council Member's technology services will continue to be reported on a minimum annual basis, in accordance with the Municipal Act
- g) Technology allowance - past experience in providing technology services to Members of Council suggests that individual members of Council have varying styles and preferences in their use of technology. Due to difficulties in accurately predicting technology expenses for each Member, it is recommended that the City forego a technology allowance for the 2014-2018 term of Council and rely on the financial reporting, provided at a minimum annually to detail Council Members' technology expenses

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

16. The City of Barrie IT Department makes every attempt to use green technology whenever possible and participates in electronics recycling programs. Any technology brought in for members of Council would be acquired and disposed of in accordance with these conditions.

ALTERNATIVE

Alternative #1:

General Committee could choose to continue with the 2010-2014 technology services, detailed in paragraph 3 for the 2014-2018 term of Council. This is not recommended due to advancements in mobile technology that have occurred since the last term. Furthermore, this option does not accommodate the preferences of Members in their use and selection of the technology.

FINANCIAL

18. There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. The costs associated with the provisioning of hardware, software and communications devices are included in the annual business plan, budgeted and administered by the IT Department.

LINKAGE TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

19. The recommendation included in this Staff Report is an operational matter that is not specifically related to any of City Council's Strategic Plans.

APPENDIX "A"

Technology Services for the 2014-2018 Term of Council

The IT Department would be responsible for deploying, administering and supporting the following technology services for Council Members during the 2014-2018 term:

- a. Voice communications - Members of Council would be issued a smart phone OR cell phone – based on their preference and the device options available through the City's contracted service provider. Additionally for,
 - i. City Councillors - a dedicated four-digit extension will be assigned to each Councillor, this extension will be programmed to automatically forward all calls to their mobile phone
 - ii. The Mayor - a dedicated four-digit extension will be assigned and programmed to a desk phone in the Mayor's office
- b. Computing hardware - Members of Council will have the option of receiving a laptop computer OR a tablet computer – based on their preference and the device options available
 - i. For City Councillors, this device would be in addition to the desktop computers deployed and made available to them in the Councillors' office and lounge
 - ii. For the Mayor, this device would be in addition to a computer deployed in the Mayor's office
- c. Internet access – laptop and tablet computing devices will be equipped with integrated Wi-Fi and LTE (cellular) network connectivity. Computing devices deployed in the Mayor's office and the Councillors' office and lounge will be connected via cable to the City's network infrastructure
- d. Printing/Faxing/Copying - multi-function work-centre units will be available in the Mayor's office and Councillors' office and lounge at City Hall
- e. Technical support - the City's service ticketing system will continue to be used to log, track and manage Council service requests
- f. Financial reporting – the expenses associated with each Council Member's technology services will be reported on a minimum annual basis, in accordance with the Municipal Act