BOARD / ADVISORY COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE REPORT

DATE: March 19, 2019

TO: Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Operations and Administration

FROM: Chair and Members
Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee

TOPIC: Council and Committee of the Whole Voting

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT all vote results at televised meetings BE READ aloud, including the names of the Councillors and in the manner they voted, to accommodate persons who cannot read the results on the screen; and

THAT the necessary By-law to Amend Chapter 15 (Procedure) of The City of Brantford Municipal Code BE PRESENTED to City Council for adoption.

BACKGROUND:

The Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee met on February 20, 2019 and discussed the manner in which City Council and Committee voting results are displayed/relayed to viewers during televised meetings.

The Committee had concerns regarding the fact that results are displayed on the large projection screens in Council Chambers, but only whether the item has been carried or not is announced out loud by the City Clerk.

The Committee feels that this primarily visual way of relaying results creates a barrier for persons who may not be able to read the screen for a number of reasons (such as, but not limited to, visual impairment or difficulty reading). By only announcing the overall result of the vote, the audience may not be able to easily identify how a particular member of Council voted on an item that is of interest to them. Reading out how each Councillor voted at the time the vote is taken provides this information to audience members immediately (rather than waiting for the approved Minutes of the Meeting to
be available publicly during the next Meeting cycle). This will allow individuals to reach out to their Councillor after that meeting.

The Committee is aware that special requests for expanded voting results are currently being accommodated through the City Clerk’s Office, but the Committee believes that reading the results of each vote aloud, including the names of the Councillors and in the manner they voted, would be a better means of accommodation.

The Committee also understands that there are procedural rules that must be followed, and hope that this accommodation can be made for persons who cannot read the display screen during televised Meetings.

p.p. Lisa Hooper, Chair
Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee