



Agenda Abstract

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Date: Feb. 12, 2024
Department: Town Clerk
Agenda Section: Regular
Public hearing: No
Date of public hearing: N/A

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Town Clerk Sarah Kimrey

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Retention schedule for meeting audio and video recordings follow-up discussion

Attachments:

None.

Summary:

Effective Oct. 1, 2021, the board adopted the 2021 General Records Schedule for Local Government Agencies. The schedule allows government agencies to destroy audio and video recordings of public body meetings after the approval of official written minutes.

PUBLIC BODIES: AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS SEE ALSO: Public Bodies: Minutes (below).	Destroy in office after approval of official written minutes. <i>NOTE: If these serve as the official minutes, as allowed by G.S. 143-318.10(e), their retention should be permanent. These disposition instructions apply to recordings produced solely for the purpose of generating official written minutes.</i>
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Historically, it has been the town's practice to retain meeting audio and/or video recordings for up to three years. The town attorney advised staff to draft a written policy if recordings are to be kept past the adopted General Records Schedule. This topic was brought to the board at its Aug. 14, 2023, meeting for direction; staff was asked to further explore various policy options, methods of retention, and potential budget implications for a mature retention policy.

Current Process:

Board of Commissioners meeting video recordings are posted to the town's YouTube channel and on the town's Municode Meetings Portal embedded on the town's website for meetings from August 2022 to present. These videos are available for public inspection without staff assistance. Audio recordings dating back to January 2020 and video recordings dating back to April 2020 are currently being stored on the town's server.

Appointed Boards meeting audio recordings are stored on the town's server and in a private Microsoft SharePoint account (for contract minutes preparation purposes). These recordings would require staff assistance for public inspection.

Storage option and storage costs:

Microsoft currently offers a somewhat cost-effective storage option for these types of files, Azure Blob Storage. This is a cloud-based platform that was created for storage of archived data that does not need to be accessed often. Below are our size and cost estimates for retaining audio and video recordings indefinitely that do not need high availability over time for (1 year/5 years/10 years):

Year 1 – 50 GB = \$180 per year

Year 5 – 250 GB = \$360 per year

Year 10 – 500 GB = \$720 per year

Please note these numbers are based on what we know of the file size of video and audio files today and for storing only. Additional fees are charged for downloading files based on file size. These numbers also assume the size the files remain approximately the same for the next 10 years (which is highly unlikely due to technological advancements), and that Microsoft continues to offer this storage service at the same cost for 10 years (again, highly unlikely).

Maintenance:

It is important to note that these files will need to be converted to a usable format over time. As technology advances, file formats evolve and become obsolete. Thus, these files will require intervention to continue to be viewed in the future. An example of this would be the MP3 file, which is being replaced by AAC, FLAC, WAV, and JPEG file formats. Eventually all MP3 files will need to be converted to the newer file formats to avoid being unusable. A concern with retaining data indefinitely involves degradation of the data. Technology will advance over time and the longer we store data, the harder it is to retain it at a usable quality.

Neighboring local government processes:

- Orange County: no written policy; audio recordings are destroyed after approval of written minutes; video recordings are not destroyed and are available on website dating back to 2010.
- Carrboro: no written policy; video recordings are not destroyed and are available on website dating back to 2013.
- Chapel Hill: no written policy; video recordings are not destroyed and are available on website dating back to 2006.

Financial impacts:

Minimal, as estimated above; IT vendor maintenance fees and/or staff time.

Staff recommendation and comments:

The longer these records are stored, the longer they are open to public inspection. Staff do not recommend storing recordings beyond three years. Doing so may result in additional staff time/vendor charges to perform file maintenance, and file downloading fees to fulfill public records requests.

Action requested:

Direction; staff will draft a policy to bring back for board approval at a future meeting.