

---

## Memorandum

---

**To:** Budget Standing Committee

**Cc:** Kristine Douglas, Director of Financial Management Services  
Margaret Kreuk, Manager, Budgets and Capital  
Robyn Shearer, Accounting and Budget Clerk  
Jeanette Pillitteri, Director of Corporate Support Services  
Karthik Venkataraman, Senior Manager Information Technology Services

**From:** Jim Riddell, Director of Planning and Building Services

**Date:** November 13, 2017

**Subject:** Cost of full Implementation of the Building Permitting Application System

---

BSC has requested the following:

“Further that staff report on the costs of the full implementation of the Building Permitting Application System, and on what improvements to online reporting on building services could be funded from Building Services Reserves.”

PBS utilizes many technologies to provide their services to the citizens of St. Catharines. CSS-Information Technology (“IT”) has provided the following relevant information with regards to the IT functions as a whole being used in the PBS area:

- AMANDA is currently the platform used to manage compliance, permitting and licensing as part of the Building Permitting Application.
- Any Building Permitting Application system works in conjunction with many other ancillary applications and requires robust hardware infrastructure to perform effectively.
- Online services, mobile functionality and citizen engagement require various web services technologies to provide access to the Building Permitting Application platform.
- Various integrations are in place and are also required to be developed to provide seamless processing between applications for the end users.
- Staff resourcing with adequate skills is further required to efficiently implement the necessary upgrades and integrations to provide the optimal user experience for any customer of the PBS department
- Any budgetary discussion must include a holistic view of all technologies that enable the full implementation of the building permitting application system.

- Below is a chart of the costs for the full implementation of the Information Technology required towards the improvements for the building services.

Item	Description	Implementation Cost	Ongoing Support Annual Cost
<b>Items included in the 2018 Budget</b>			
Maintenance, Support and Version Upgrade	General bug fixes, enhancements and support for third-party mobile inspection application	Implemented earlier	\$85,000* (Currently budgeted in IT budget)
Mobile Services	Facilitates inspections to be logged through a mobile device (iOS/Android) and transferred into Amanda available to all inspectors – Implementation costs of \$90,000 and support costs of \$65,355 for a total of \$155,355 spread over five years (began in 2017)	\$0	\$31,000** (Currently budgeted in PBS budget)
Module Enhancements	Conditions Module to provide comment management for applications	Implemented earlier	\$2,500* (Currently budgeted in PBS budget)
Infrastructure	Hardware Servers housing databases, applications and security to run platform	Implemented earlier	\$30,000* (Currently budgeted in IT budget)
<b>Total included in 2018 budget</b>			<b>\$148,500</b>
<b>Additional items possibly funded by reserves.</b>			
Module Enhancements	Collaboration module to provide access to external entitles for comments and reviews	\$10,000	\$2,500
Payment Processing – PBS permitting fees	Third-party payment portals and processing services to allow multiple channels of payment for services	\$2,000	\$20,000***
Web Services	Applications and software required to	\$0	\$1,000

	provide online presence of Building and Planning Services, e.g. Webservers, proxy servers, hosting services		
Additional Software	Additional software required for digital markup, plan review, collaboration, etc.	N/A	\$2,000*
<b>Total items that would need to be added</b>		<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$25,500</b>

\* - Annual Renewal

\*\* - Annual amount for 5 Year Contract

\*\*\* - Estimated Annual Transaction fees

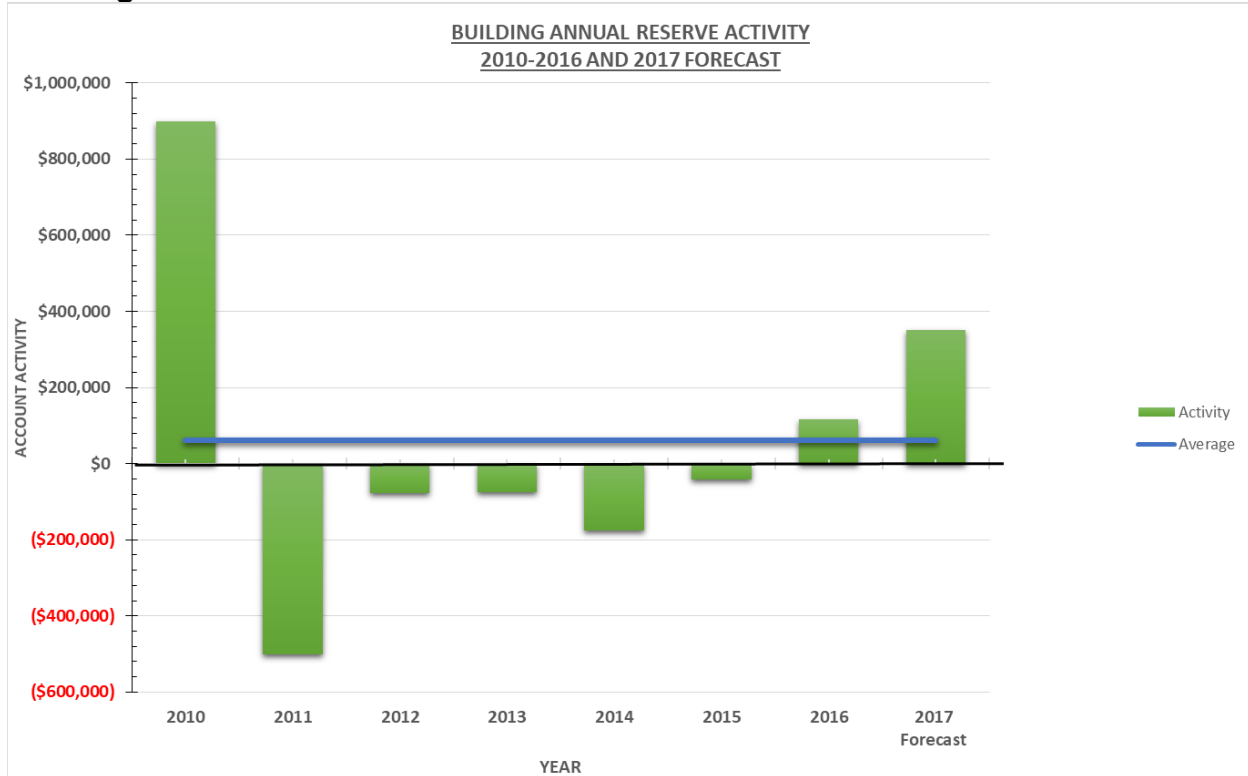
As shown in the chart above the amount of the additional items that would be needed to fully implement the Building Permitting Application System total \$37,500 (\$12,000 for implementation and \$25,500 for ongoing support).

Implementation and upgrading of the Building Permitting Application System has been a work plan item for the past number of years. There are \$146,000 of funds available in this project fund that were budgeted for various modules and upgrades of the Amanda system. However, given that technology changes rapidly staff has waited to implement certain features in order to take advantage of newer feature sets of any future modules. These unspent project funds could be used rather to fund the additional non-staff items needed for full implementation of the AMANDA System in 2018 (\$37,500). Any additional expenditure could be funded through the building reserve as they are related to the building permit function.

At this time existing staff resources can implement/upgrade the Building Permitting Application System to enhance specific updates such as online reporting and payment due to the limitations of working on other corporate projects outlined in the IT project work plan.

In order to provide a full implementation of the building permitting system there is enough workload equivalent to that of an additional FTE. This would be in addition to the Applications Analyst/Database Coordinator position added to the staff complement in PBS in 2015. Ideally given that the requirements the Building Permitting Application System requires a combination of skill sets, this additional workload could be provided to IT with an additional staff resource. The estimated annual cost for this staff position including wages and benefits is \$120,000. As this work is project specific and long term sustainability of the building reserve is uncertain at this time, it is further recommended that if there is need for expedited implementation, a staff position be hired on a contract basis and funded through the reserve. However, a permanent position would be ideal in ensuring ongoing support and in-house IT skill maintenance.

## Building Reserve Historical data:



As shown above, contributions fluctuate from one year to the next. The contributions are dependent on the amount of revenues collected in the year and amount of direct and indirect expenditures to provide the services. In more recent years, the inflationary increases of building permit fees significantly increases the likelihood of a positive variance at the end of the year, although, there are no guarantees that there will be a contribution to the reserve in any one year.

## Corporate Staffing

In both the 2017 and 2018 budget years there were a number of additional staffing requests made across the corporation. In 2017, a Project Expediter was approved for the PBS and EDT and contract Project Manager was approved for PBS. When the 2017 and 2018 operating budget was tabled it included a list of the staff requests. In 2017 budget year the full time IT Staff were of high priority. Senior staff did not rate prioritize the staffing requests in 2018 as the City expenditures exceeded BSC guidance. However there remains the number of needs across the corporation with regards to staffing.

James N. Riddell, M.PL., MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Building Services