

February 20, 2025

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager
Subject: City Council Electronic Voting System

202500262

REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202401604

On June 12, 2024, the City Council referred the following for a report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Walsh, **WE MOVE** that the Administration prepare a report within ninety (90) days on the possible use of electronic voting for City Council meetings and committee meetings. This report should include possible methods, costs to implement, and new Council rules that would be required for implementation.

Background

This report seeks to explore the potential implementation of an electronic voting system for City Council and committee meetings. The purpose of this report is to analyze the feasibility, costs, and necessary procedural changes associated with introducing electronic voting. The report will also address the necessary modifications to City Council rules that would be required for successful adoption.

Electronic voting (e-voting) refers to the use of digital devices or systems to cast and record votes in a formal decision-making process. In the context of City Council and committee meetings, this could mean replacing traditional voice voting with a system that allows for votes to be cast via electronic means such as tablets, computer systems, or dedicated voting machines.

The Administration, in collaboration with the City Clerk's Office, has diligently sought information on electronic voting solutions that can integrate with the City's existing Council online system, Granicus. On September 19, 2024, the City issued a Request for Information (RFI) that was open for approximately three weeks. Only one vendor responded to the solicitation; that firm was Granicus, LLC, the City's current vendor for the Clerk of Council's online system. In their response, Granicus provided limited details on how their voting software could integrate with our current infrastructure. The information received via their submission includes annual subscription costs for a three-year period, totaling approximately \$20,000 per year. This cost would be in addition to the \$37,000 currently paid for the Legistar system that the Clerk's Office utilizes, resulting in a combined total of

\$57,000 in annual fees for both systems. It is important to note this figure excludes additional infrastructure costs such as hardware, wiring, software updates, personnel requirements, and ongoing maintenance needed to fully integrate the voting system into the City's operations.

To fully understand what is being proposed by Granicus, City staff is working to schedule a demonstration to further evaluate whether their solution can meet the City's needs, align with Open Meetings Law, and function efficiently within the existing infrastructure.

Rules of Council

The Rules of Council outline specific procedures for the calling, tallying, and announcing of votes. With the implementation of electronic voting, revisions to these Rules will be necessary to ensure proper alignment with the new voting system. As the functionality of the electronic voting system is evaluated and tested, the Law Department will carefully review the existing rules to determine which provisions require modification or updating. Any amendments to the Rules of Council may be made through a majority vote of Council members.

Recommendation

This document serves as an initial report based on the preliminary information gathered. Upon completion of the demonstration and subsequent discussions, a more detailed report will be provided. This report will include specific methods for system integration, a breakdown of additional costs, and recommended modifications to the Rules of Council for consideration by City Council. Further analysis is needed in collaboration with the City Manager's Office, CitiCable, Procurement, Enterprise Technology Systems, Law, and the Clerk of Council.

cc: Melissa Autry, CMC, Clerk of Council