

# Hesperia, CA

City implements Granicus' Legislative Management Suite to run more productive meetings with touch-screen voting systems



## Problem

Hesperia's public meeting process was outdated. Staff kept track of meeting actions on paper and took roll call votes, which lead to greater discussions and longer meetings.

## Solution

With Granicus' Legislative Management Suite, Hesperia added touch-screen voting systems, which empowered elected members to cast votes simultaneously and anonymously as well as make motions and request to speak electronically.

## Benefit

Hesperia streamlined public meetings, reduced in-meeting time, and installed public displays in its meeting chambers, helping the public easily follow along. Additionally, the clerk's office was able to create and publish minutes in about half the time.

“The voting system has made things more organized and has helped keep us on track. It has really streamlined the whole meeting process.”

- Melinda Sayre-Castro,  
Assistant City Clerk

## Fast Facts

**Agency Type:** Local Government

**Population:** 98,500

**Solution:**

Granicus Platform

Government Transparency Suite

Meeting Efficiency Suite

Legislative Management Suite

**Active Since:** 2006

## Hesperia wanted more orderly and efficient public meetings

City staff members wanted to improve public meeting processes and bring the city into the modern era. “The best description for our previous meeting process would be ‘old-school’. We used tape recorders, took verbatim minutes, and conducted roll call votes on each item which elongated the meeting,” says Melinda Sayre-Castro, Assistant City Clerk. “It was pretty archaic,” she continues.

When the clerk called for a vote, each member gave his or her vote verbally. This method disrupted the flow of meetings and created further discussion. “People often spoke out of turn and multiple people would end up talking at the same time,” recalls Sayre-Castro. These discussions also presented a challenge for the clerk when she created the minutes. She was responsible for accurately recording how each elected member motioned, seconded, and voted. But when conversations overlapped, it was difficult to correctly identify speakers.

Hesperia needed a solution that would bring more order to their public meetings, minimize in-meeting disruptions from members speaking over one another, and help staff quickly and easily produce a complete record of the meeting.

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## Hesperia deployed Granicus’ legislative management tools to automate meeting procedures

Hesperia signed on with Granicus in 2006 in an effort to streamline the legislative process. The city implemented streaming media and public meeting management tools for five meeting bodies: City Council, Community Redevelopment Agency, Fire Protection District, Water District, and Planning Commission.

Prior to a meeting, the clerk’s office created and uploaded an agenda into Granicus’ meeting management system. During the meeting, the clerk controlled the digital recording and was able to start, stop, and activate agenda items live.

With the Legislative Management Suite, Hesperia’s five elected members electronically controlled the flow of the meeting. Through touch-screen displays and an easy-to-use interface, members could quickly access a paperless agenda and record their individual actions. “Our council members are comfortable with the technology and use the touch-screen displays to make motions and votes on their own,” says Sayre-Castro.

“I no longer call roll call votes; the responsibility is on the elected members. The meeting member interface allows the chair to open an item and call for a vote. It also gives members the ability to request to speak, make a motion, second, and vote,” she continues. Members vote simultaneously and can review results instantly through their touch-screen displays.

Because the city automated roll call, speaker queue, motions, and votes, Sayre-Castro says her in-meeting responsibilities have changed. “During the meeting my job is quite simple, I now only type in very general comments and notes and monitor voting,” she remarks. All actions were routed from the elected members directly into the official public record, reducing the risk of any error in the post-meeting workflow.

Additionally, Hesperia installed public displays in their meeting chambers to give audiences real-time updates on meeting actions. “Once a vote is taken it is shown on our public display in the room and also broadcast online,” notes Sayre-Castro. With this monitor, Hesperia could display the current agenda item, vote results, and speakers. Prior to Granicus, the city distributed handouts during the meeting, if they were available but, “they were difficult to read,” says Kim Summers, Assistant to the City Manager. “The public display has helped citizens have a better grasp on the issues at hand and provides a better visual,” she continues.

## City reduces clerical work in the meeting and brings more order to the public meeting process

The Legislative Management Suite reduced Hesperia’s administrative tasks and allowed staff to focus on priority issues. “We have really cut down on processes and clerical work so that the clerk can focus on more important parts of the meeting,” notes Sayre-Castro. In addition, the use of touch screen voting technology gave the city a consistent and orderly meeting process. “The

voting system has made things more organized and has helped keep us on track. It has really streamlined the whole meeting process,” remarks Sayre-Castro.

Because meeting actions come directly from the elected members and the city moved from verbatim to action minutes, time spent creating minutes decreased by more than 60%. “Before Granicus it could take us anywhere from two to five hours to complete our minutes. Today, it takes me 20 minutes to an hour at most to complete them,” says Sayre-Castro. “Moving to action minutes has really saved us during this budget downturn when we’re so under-staffed. It makes all the difference,” she continues.

Instead of creating a written word-for-word transcript of each meeting, the city produced a complete integrated public record. This record contained action minutes linked to a digital, indexed recording of the meeting. The public could also access any relevant supporting materials.

## Additional Benefits of the Granicus Solution

- Integrated seamlessly with Laserfiche Agenda Management System for streamlined workflow
- Improved citizen outreach with live and archived, online streaming media
- Helped residents stay connected to their local government from homes or businesses
- Recorded and streamed all-staff monthly meetings to keep employees informed