



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Aldinger and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Lindy Coe-Juell, Assistant to the City Manager
Liza Tamura, City Clerk
Leilani Emnace, Information Systems Manager
Gwen Eng, General Services Manager

DATE: November 6, 2007

SUBJECT: Consideration of an Electronic Voting System and Audio Visual System Update for the City Council Chamber and, Based on Council Direction, Appropriate \$84,695.18 from the CIP Fund Balance for the Updates

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the purchase, installation and integration of an electronic voting system and audio visual (AV) system update for the City Council Chamber. Should Council choose to move forward with this item, staff recommends that the City Council: a) waive formal bidding per Municipal Code Section 2.36.140 (waivers), 2) appropriate \$84,695.18 from the unreserved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) balance and, 3) award an order of \$35,293.71 to Granicus for the electronic voting system, and 4) award an order of \$117,042.17 to Western Audio Visual Corporation for the chamber AV system update and Granicus integration.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The total cost of purchase, installation, integration and training for the electronic voting system and the AV update is \$152,335.88. During the October 18, 2005 City Council meeting, Council approved \$240,000 in the FY 2005/2006 CIP for Council Chamber refurbishment projects to include replacement of the audience chairs, the carpeting and lobby floor tiles. These projects have been completed and \$67,640.70 remains in the CIP carry forward project budget for the City Council Chamber refurbishment. Staff recommends using this remaining balance for the electronic voting and AV systems update and appropriating the additional \$84,695.18 needed for the updates from the unreserved CIP fund balance. The available unreserved CIP fund balance is approximately \$1.9 million.

The cost of the electronic voting system is \$31,458.63 and includes the software, system servers, installation, configuration and three days of on-site training for staff and City Council. Granicus charges a monthly management service fee of \$639.18, which covers all updates to the software, 24/7/365 support, and proactive monitoring of the system. This management fee would begin once the voting system is operational. If the award of order is given this evening, Granicus estimates

that the system could be operational for the January 15, 2008 Council meeting. The award of \$35,293.71 to Granicus would cover the first six months of the management fee. After the first six months, the ongoing fee would be included in Council's budget.

The cost of the AV updates is \$117,042.17 and includes purchase and installation of two 65-inch HD plasma flat screen panel displays for the audience to view, twelve gooseneck microphones with LED on/off light displays, 15-inch display panels for Councilmembers and the City Clerk, all required cabling, electronics, and labor and millwork to reconfigure the dais to allow the 15-inch monitors to be partially recessed.

BACKGROUND:

In 1990, the City Council purchased and began using an electronic voting system that consisted of push buttons and lighted public display of the vote results. Due to computer complications, the system failed beyond repair in 2000. Since that time, the City Council has been using a verbal call for vote and verbal report of voting results. Although this verbal system has worked, several Councilmembers have expressed interest in an updated system. Benefits of moving to an electronic voting system include visual public display of the agenda items and motions, the ability for Councilmembers to vote simultaneously, and visual public display of the recorded vote.

Several types of electronic voting systems are available ranging from simple lighted vote displays to more sophisticated electronic interfaces. The most audience-friendly system reviewed by staff utilizes modern visual displays, such as rear projection or flat screen panels, for display of the agenda items, presentation materials and voting results. In our Council Chamber, the most practical modern visual display would consist of two plasma flat screen panels. The work of an AV specialist is required to integrate the voting system with the display panels. Since this visual display update is necessary for a new electronic voting system, the AV specialist could provide other updates while doing the integration work. If Council decides to move forward with the electronic voting system, it would be an opportune time to update the presentation system (eliminate the projector) and microphones in the chamber.

Overall, the integrated voting and AV system would consist of 15-inch individual display panels for the Councilmembers and the City Clerk and two large audience display panels in addition to a voting system interface for the City Clerk and Mayor. The display panels for the Councilmembers have touch screen technology to accommodate making motions and placing votes. The City Clerk would use the display and voting system software interface to bring up each agenda item, call for the vote, record motions and record the vote results. From their individual display panels, the Councilmembers would be able to view agenda items, view attached staff reports and other documentation, make motions using the touch screen technology, view presentations, view the live broadcast and vote using the touch screen technology. The Mayor's interface would allow for a request to speak function for Councilmembers and audience participation, should the Council decide to use this feature.

Two 65-inch flat screen plasma panels would be installed on either side of the center chamber wall for the audience to view. These display panels would show the current agenda item and motion, would be used to display presentations of all media and would show the results of each vote taken by Council. Additionally, the gooseneck microphones would each have a clearly displayed red LED light that indicates that the microphone is on. The AV specialist expects that these new

microphones will enhance the audio quality of the webstreaming and video archive. The proposed cordless microphone has been provided by the AV specialist in several other cities and used with consistent, successful results.

DISCUSSION:

In May 2007, the City Clerk conducted a survey through the League of California Cities to find out how many cities are using an electronic voting system and, if electronic, to find out what vendor is used. Of the cities that responded, we found that 58% use a verbal system and 42% use an electronic system. Of those that use an electronic voting system, half use Granicus and the other half use a number of different electronic systems. Based on the responses from the City Clerks and a search of products available through trade magazines and on the internet, staff scheduled phone conferences with web-connection display for five electronic voting system vendors.

Through the web-connection display staff was able to view demonstrations of each voting system as we held the conference call with the vendors. Staff eliminated one vendor because the technology was a push-button with lighted vote result display and would have simply replaced the old technology used prior to 2000. Another vendor was eliminated because we found that they actually specialize in the display panels for the elected body to use in voting, not the voting software. Among the three remaining vendors, staff agreed that the Granicus system had the most user-friendly Council/Clerk interface and the most clearly arranged and understandable screen views (listing of agenda items, motions and voting results) for public display. Staff conducted a site visit to the city of Chino (see pictures below) and staff along with Mayor Aldinger and Councilmember Cohen visited the City of Torrance; both cities had recently had the Granicus electronic voting system installed. Both cities' staff reported being very happy with the system due to improved public display of agenda items and voting results and for increased efficiency in meeting flow.

City of Chino Council Chamber:

Dais with Councilmember Display Screens



Flat Screen Panel for Audience to View



If the City Council decides to move forward with an electronic voting system, staff recommends the Granicus system for several reasons. As mentioned above, the Council/Clerk interface was the most user-friendly of the systems we reviewed. Additionally, Granicus has an added feature called Minutes Maker that is designed to make the process of creating minutes more efficient by recording the attendance, motions and votes in an electronic template. The minutes, as created

using this template, would be cross-linked to our Granicus archived video/audio recordings (available on our website) and would be keyword searchable. Staff has received very positive feedback from other cities already using the Granicus voting system regarding the quality of the system, installation and ongoing service. Finally, staff has been very pleased with the service from Granicus for our current webstreaming and audio/video recording.

If the City Council decides to move forward with an electronic voting system, staff recommends using Western Audio Visual Corporation for the integration of the voting system and installation of other equipment to include the two 65-inch flat-screen plasma display panels for audience viewing, the 15-inch display panels for the Councilmembers and the City Clerk, Crestron control panels for the City Council (allows Councilmembers to toggle between the agenda item, voting system display and live broadcast) twelve gooseneck microphones (7 at the dais, 1 for the City Attorney, 1 for the City Manager, 2 for the City Clerk's station and 1 for the public podium) and a new cordless microphone. Staff recommends using Western because they have successfully integrated the Granicus voting system with AV equipment in several other cities' Councilchambers. Staff has received positive feedback from other cities regarding their product and installation service.