



# Pinellas County, FL

Pinellas County automates its meetings and agenda process.

75%

Reduction in agenda item approval time

100%

Reduction in paper required for meetings

Reduced

overtime to prepare for bimonthly meetings

## OVERVIEW

Pinellas County ran board meetings using traditional methods, including paper agendas, long approval timelines and lots of extra staff hours. By modernizing with Granicus' Meeting and Agenda solutions, they were able to streamline the process and reduce the approval time to three weeks—a 75 percent reduction—and the need for paper or additional staff time.

## SITUATION | A BEACH PARADISE SWIMMING IN PAPER AND PROCESSES

The white sand beaches of Pinellas County lure people from around the country to relocate, retire or visit throughout the year. But the easy-going vibe didn't extend to county government. Workers were stretched thin by time-consuming, manual processes. For example, in an instance where a department needed approval for an item by the county administrator or board, staff were required to: **Prepare the document, attach any draft documents, send it through contract review, print out the revised version add a paper checklist and use inter-office mail to route it for departmental review.**

After this cumbersome process, the document could sit for days or even weeks on someone's desk with no method of tracking it. When that person finally got around to signing off, it was sent to the next involved department where it could again sit and wait for approval.

"If there was an item that a board member wanted on the agenda for a January meeting, it had to be started back in September," says Becky Batten, IT Applications Developer at Pinellas County.

The lack of ability to track who was currently reviewing a document was a particular hardship. On many occasions, county workers had to drive to various offices to speed up the approval process in person.

Agenda items and all their supporting documents were required to be printed at every meeting, so the amount of paper for a single meeting could sometimes fill several boxes — infact, Pinellas County once had a single agenda item that consumed four reams of paper.

## MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

Legistar, Video, Minutes

“Our previous process was tedious, time consuming and expensive. It stresses me out just to think about it.”

Becky Batten, IT Applications Developer at Pinellas County



## SOLUTION | EMBRACING A MODERN, DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

Pinellas County knew that their manual system of processes was causing considerable stress and wasting tons of paper. After an extensive search, they decided to embrace a digitalization strategy that could automate much of what they do.

Partnering with Granicus, the county overhauled its agenda creation and approval workflow with tools like Legistar. Now a person drafting an agenda item can track where it is in the process and how long it's been with a particular person. What used to take weeks for a single person now takes just a few days.

"A typical agenda item now takes just three weeks to approve," Batten says. That's about a quarter of the time it previously took.

And once review is complete, the item can be added to the agenda seamlessly. Posting a completed agenda to the website takes just a few clicks. By providing board members with iPads, all meetings can be conducted paper free—unless a copy is specifically requested by somebody.

The streamlining doesn't stop at agenda management. Using Granicus' Video and Minutes solutions in tandem, clerks can stream the meeting live while creating video timestamps that can be integrated directly into the meeting minutes. All that's needed after the fact is video trimming and proofreading the minutes before they can be effortlessly added to Legistar.

## RESULTS | AUTOMATED MEETING AND AGENDA PREPARATION

- Went from taking an average of three months to approve meeting agenda items to three weeks—a 75 percent reduction.
- With automation, county staff need to work less overtime to prepare for bimonthly meetings.
- By integrating the use of Granicus Video, the county is able offer better indexing and search capabilities—plus, the ability to find video of previous meetings quickly. "With everything stored in the cloud, there's no longer a risk of losing any of our archived material," Batten says.

## ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus brings governments closer to the people they serve — driving meaningful change for communities around the globe with comprehensive cloud-based solutions for communications, government website design, meeting and agenda management software, records management, and digital services, Granicus empowers stronger relationships between government and residents across the U.S., U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean.