



AGENDA AUTOMATION PROPOSAL



8.20.2013

VILLAGE COUNCIL WORK SESSION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A strategic initiative for FY 2014 is to automate the Village Council agenda packet preparation and distribution process. This initiative was formed to enhance customer service, leverage technology to improve processes, and better manage operating costs. Unless a special request is made, the Village does not currently provide agenda packet materials to the public, only the agenda outline. This new service level enhancement will help improve our customer satisfaction ratings and supports the Village of Pinehurst's mission to preserve and enhance the community's character and ambience by guiding growth, managing change, and providing services in a financially responsible manner.

After evaluating the current process, the BIRDIE team identified two major factors that supported the need for a process improvement:

1. The ability to provide public access to the agenda packet and backup material, ultimately providing more public transparency.
2. The opportunity to change from a manual process to an automated system, creating a more user friendly approach, especially when searching archived information.

The team analyzed eight potential solutions, completed company demos for four systems, completed a site visit to two North Carolina towns, and ultimately recommends moving forward with NovusAGENDA.

NovusAGENDA is expected to result in efficiency gains of approximately \$29,000 per year net of the \$4,200 annual software fee. The first year of implementation will have startup costs of \$3,500 for technology (iPads) and training. With the ability to use this system for other boards and commissions, the Village has the opportunity to increase efficiency gains ever further in the future.

“We have been paperless since May 2011 and using Novus. I cannot say enough good things... the software is easy to use and their customer service is awesome.”

**- Town Clerk of
Cornelius, NC**

**“...convenient,
ease of use,
adaptable...”**
**-Mayor of
Cornelius, NC**

NovusAGENDA will be a vital tool for the public, by gaining access to our full agenda packets and having the ability to search the database of public records. NovusAGENDA will also benefit the Council by eliminating the manual packet distribution and pickup, allowing Councilmembers to access the agenda on any device (iPads, PCs, cell phones, etc.) from anywhere, and providing research capabilities on previous agenda items and documents. Ultimately, this solution will provide an overall reduction of paper, a cost savings, a more efficient process for staff, and a more user-friendly platform for the Village Council and the public before, during, and after Council meetings.



PROCESS FOR EVALUATION

It was determined that this initiative is a process improvement that qualified to go through the BIRDIE process, a 6-step method for employees to document process improvement efforts.



The BIRDIE team was composed of the following members:

- Andy Wilkison, Village Manager
- Natalie Dean, Assistant Village Manager
- Bruce Gould, Senior Planner
- Barbara Thompson, IT Technician
- Lauren Craig, Village Clerk

Jason Whitaker, Chief Information Officer and Matt Shuster, Administration Intern also played critical roles as we evaluated this process improvement. The BIRDIE team was equipped with representation from Administration, Information Technology, and Planning & Inspections to give a well-rounded perspective on the issue and recommended solution.

The team first reviewed the current process that Village Clerk, Lauren Craig had documented. After team members became familiarized with the current process, we defined the problem as: the current process does not provide enough transparency, is inefficient, and makes it difficult to archive and research historical records.

The team evaluated a list of eight possible solutions, formulated from research and the feedback from other Clerks within North Carolina. After completing the evaluations of potential solutions, the team visited Cornelius, NC to evaluate NovusAGENDA and visited Lexington, NC to evaluate IQM2. Cornelius and Lexington both gave very informative demonstrations for their use with their respective systems allowing us to hear from the perspectives of the Clerk, the IT Director, and the Mayor at both locations.

The demonstrations of the potential solutions were very helpful for the team to gain a better understanding of the capabilities of agenda automation. It was noted that most solutions are programmed to aid in the preparation of agenda packets, distributing the packets in multiple locations electronically, and even the ability to efficiently prepare minutes from the meetings. The potential solutions were all very strong, making the evaluation for the BIRDIE team critical to determine the best fit for the needs of the Village of Pinehurst.



CONCLUSION

The BIRDIE team unanimously recommends moving forward with NovusAGENDA as the solution for the agenda automation needs for the Village of Pinehurst. This recommendation includes each member on the Village Council receiving an iPad device, keyboard case, and in-depth training for ease of use. The team feels that NovusAGENDA is a reputable company with experience in a number of local governments across the United States.



SEVERAL NovusAGENDA FUNCTIONS:

- Internal and external customers can search the database for historical information.
- Ability to upload historical minutes, ordinances, and resolutions.
- Able to have electronic or printed copies if needed.
- Ability to view agenda packet and minutes and for staff members to give approvals of workflow on the PC, iPad, and phone.
- The agenda and minutes can be viewed as an HTML version for ease of use.
- Ability to run a hardcopy of the agenda only (1-2 pages) for each board member to have at their seat during a meeting.
- Streamlined process if changes are made to update the agenda after being posted.
- Ability to use for other boards and committees with no additional fee.
- Training will be provided for users.
- Ability for the Clerk to use the “minutes tool” during the meeting.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

