

WORKSHOP

Consideration of Transition to Digital Agendas

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

**Leon County Board of County Commissioners' Chambers
Leon County Courthouse, 5th Floor**

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Leon County Board of County Commissioners

Workshop Cover Sheet

October 11, 2011

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator 

Title: Workshop on Consideration of Transition to Digital Agendas

County Administrator Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Department/Division Review and Approval:	Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator
Lead Staff/ Project Team:	Pat Curtis, Director, Management Information Systems,

Executive Summary

Issue Briefing:

This workshop presents a proposal to transition from paper to digital County Commission agendas. This transition will provide process efficiencies and cost reductions. The use of iPad tablet technology is recommended for this transition.

Fiscal Impact:

This item has a one-time fiscal impact of approximately \$11,410 associated with the initial purchase. It is estimated that there is \$11,500 in anticipated recurring cost savings; partially associated with direct expenses, and partially associated with staff time.

Staff Recommendation:

Option #1: Approve the transition to digital agendas with the use of iPad tablet technology.

Report and Discussion

Background:

The County regularly evaluates and reviews processes to identify areas for efficiency improvements and possible cost savings. Through its Sustainability program, Leon County has already recognized savings by reducing substantial amounts of paper being utilized by decreasing the distribution list of the Board's agenda. The next step, in the County's continuing efforts to streamline and improve the agenda process, is to evaluate the transition to a digital agenda.

With the advent of tablet technology in the past year and the technology industry's ongoing reports of increasing adoption of tablets for digital agendas by many jurisdictions nationwide, it has been proven that savings can be achieved through the elimination of paper production of agenda materials. MIS conducted extensive research on these jurisdictions in consideration of transitioning the Board's paper agendas and workshop materials to a digital form with tablet technology. This workshop presents a proposal to transition to digital agendas, based on this research with the expectation that Leon County will achieve additional cost savings from eliminating the paper production of the agenda books and workshop materials, as well as achieve improved process efficiencies using tablet technology.

Analysis:

MIS research of early adopters of digital agendas found counties and jurisdictions use tablet technology simply as an e-reader by placing a digital copy of their agenda on the device. Cost savings from eliminating the printing of agendas and other meeting documents were achieved; and, in all cases, the jurisdictions saw a 12 – 18 month pay back on the tablets by eliminating paper production, as well as achieving reduction of their carbon footprints. The tablets provided other benefits, such as giving government officials an easy, convenient method of handling agenda materials and other official documents, compared to carrying around large, heavy agendas and notebooks containing other paper documents. Additionally, users found they could use the tablets as a convenient alternative to laptops for email access, Internet research, and note taking.

To develop the estimated cost savings associated with transitioning to a digital agenda, MIS estimated the annual paper and copying costs for FY 10/11's 18 meetings with 16 agenda and workshop books. Those paper and copying costs were approximately \$1,500. The cost of labor for producing those agendas and workshop materials ranged between \$8,000 and \$12,000. Using an average \$10,000 for labor and \$1,500 for paper and copying costs, it is estimated that approximately \$11,500 could be saved and/or reallocated annually.

The transition plan includes providing an iPad2 tablet device to each Commissioner and each Aide. In addition to local wi-fi functionality, each tablet would be outfitted for 3G network access. Free wi-fi access is available in the Courthouse, most County buildings, and numerous other locations. If a Commissioner wishes to access the 3G network that provides Internet access where wi-fi service is unavailable, this would be provided for by each individual Commissioner's budget (approximately \$30 per month).

The one-time cost for each device is:

\$730	iPad2 with 32 gb memory and 3G network capability
30	screen protector
25	case
15	iAnnotate software
<u>15</u>	<u>County network interface software</u>
\$815	Total

The total cost for 14 iPad2 3G tablets, with accessories, would be \$11,410 (\$815 x 14). With the anticipated savings of \$11,500 per year, the payback period for the \$11,410 expense would be 12 months.

Although the convenience of a digital agenda on tablets, and the costs savings of eliminating paper production, could be considered sufficient justification for transitioning to digital agendas, MIS found that process improvements could be achieved as well. Commissioners and their aides will have easy access to other documents in a digital format that are relevant to their needs; such as, the Comp. Plan, the Annual Budget, and County Ordinances. Thus, the need to carry around many large notebooks and documents to various meetings and back and forth from their offices would be eliminated. Additionally, use of a tablet device provides instant access to e-mail and calendaring, an easy method for creating digital notes, and access to one's County network files. Applications will be useful in a disaster recovery situation or remote work needs while at conferences or other venues. A tablet device can be an alternative to one's heavy, cumbersome laptop with a limited battery life. Benefits specific to the iPad2 are its 10-hour battery life, face-to-face video conferencing, and a large inventory of productivity and business applications that are free or available at a very low cost.

To increase the benefit of a digital agenda from simply an "e-reader" and to aid in the transition from paper agendas to digital agenda for review purposes, MIS researched applications that provide functions for document review; such as notations, markups, and sharing/printing of comments. Several applications were reviewed and tested with iAnnotate being considered the best solution for Leon County and at a one-time cost of less than \$15 per license. iAnnotate provides a means for creating and managing a library of digital documents that can be annotated with typed and handwritten notes, flags, bookmarks, stamps, and highlights. Entire documents, or just the pages with annotation, can be e-mailed and/or printed for sharing and easy access.

It is estimated that several year's worth of agendas and workshop materials could be stored on the proposed iPad2 device; ample access to historical information is assured. Additionally, through interfacing to one's network drives, backups of files on the iPad2 devices can be made.

There may be some minor concerns with the transition from paper to digital agendas with the main concern being one's adjustment from paper to digital form on a touch screen. Those who are strong smart phone users will have an easier transition than those who are not. It does take time and consistent use to become comfortable in the touch screen digital environment. Users will need to learn how to make notations and tags while reviewing documents in the iAnnotate software. Users will need to learn how to download the digital agendas and workshop materials from the website. Although the steps to initiate downloads is simple, the download and processing time of a 500+ page document takes about 15 minutes. This is a one-time occurrence for the agenda. Users will need to learn how to plan for the download of documents. MIS will provide training and ongoing support in the use of the iPad devices and associated software.

The proposed deployment timeline is as follows:

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| November 8, 2011 Board meeting: | introduce digital agendas with the paper version |
| November 15, 2011 Board meeting: | full transition to digital agendas, with only one paper agenda produced for the public record |

Tablets and accessories would be purchased in mid-October; MIS would load the tablets with appropriate agendas and workshop materials. Training sessions would be held the end of October when the tablets would be distributed to Commissioners and their aides. MIS staff would be available for one-on-one training and review while Commissioners and their aides work with the November 8 agenda and workshop materials.

Please note, that during the workshop, staff will provide an in-depth "hands on" demonstration and review of the actual iPad and iAnnotate software.

Options:

1. Approve the transition to digital agendas with the use of iPad tablet technology.
2. Do not approve the transition to digital agendas with the use of iPad tablet technology.
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1.

VSL/AR/PC