

Webcast (Granicus Web Streaming and Meeting Minutes Software)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Webcast?

Webcast is the City of Arlington’s broadcast web stream. The stream is encoded from the broadcast of Arlington 16, the City’s government cable channel. The web stream is provided through a contract with Granicus, Inc. of San Francisco, California and is published on the City’s web site at www.ArlingtonTX.gov/Webcast



Who is Granicus

Granicus is a California software company responsible for developing the Media Manager (web streaming) and Minutes Maker (meetings annotation) software. They are the sole source for this software. The City of Arlington entered into a contract with Granicus in October 2007. The software was implemented in early 2008 and went live to the public in May 2008.

How can I watch live meetings of the Arlington City Council on the Website?

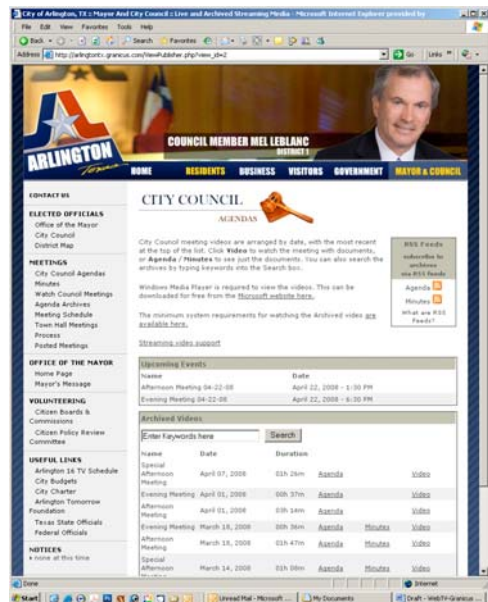
Visit www.ArlingtonTX.gov/Webcast for a live broadcast of a City Council meeting. Once on the Webcast page, wait for Arlington 16 to load on the television screen. Or, you can select the “Watch City Council Meetings with Agenda” link and visit the enhanced Webcast site. Once there, select to watch a live meeting in the ‘Upcoming Meeting’ section or archived meeting in the ‘Archived Videos’ section.

Can I watch the screen in full size?

Yes. Place the cursor over the TV screen image and double click. It should enlarge to full screen. If not, place the cursor over the TV screen image, right click and select the ‘Zoom’ option on the menu. To leave full screen mode, press the Escape key.

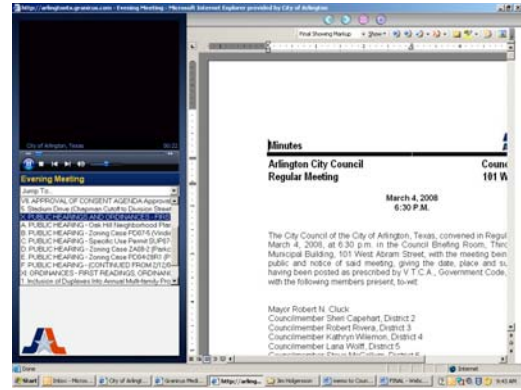
What is the Webcast archive page?

The Webcast archive page is the internet location containing archives of previous City Council meetings and a list of future meetings. Previous meetings can be viewed at any time. These meetings contain the entire City Council Meeting including the original broadcast video and audio, the Council agenda and if approved, the official minutes from the meeting. The City Council Agenda page is published on the web site at http://ArlingtonTX.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2 and is easily accessed from www.ArlingtonTX.gov/Webcast.



I only want to see a certain section of the Council meeting. How can I do that?

To view a specific section of a Council meeting, go to the City Council Agenda page http://ArlingtonTX.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2 and select the archived Council meeting you wish to view. Click the Video link and wait for the Council meeting to load. Once the meeting is playing, click the drop down menu under the video screen and select the section you are interested in viewing. Select that item and the video will begin playing that section of the meeting.



I don't want to look through the entire video; I just want to look at a specific topic or item. Can I do a search?

To search for a specific topic, enter the topic or item you are looking for in the Keyword box located in the Archived Videos Section. Press the Search button to search the archived database. View the results and select the topic or item you want to view. Select the underlined –linked – description and the topic will be played in the video window.

I don't have a personal computer at home. How can I watch meetings on the web?

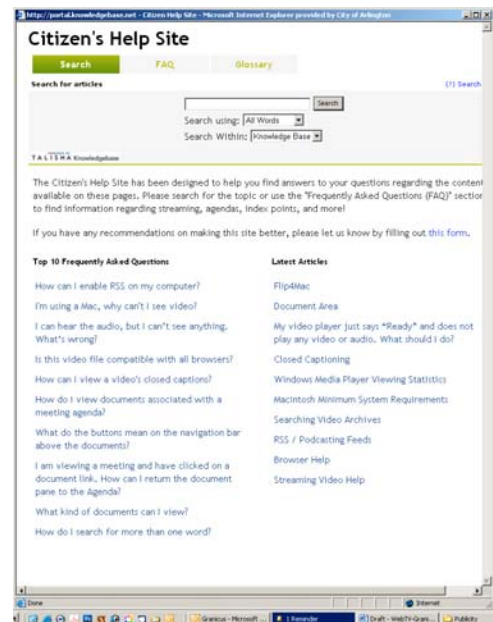
All Arlington branch libraries have computers that allow citizens to access the Internet.

I missed last week's meeting, is it on the web?

Yes. The City Secretary's Office publishes Council meeting videos and agendas for viewing by 5 PM the day following the Council meeting. The CSO reviews the Council Video and links the agenda so any section of the meeting is easily found.

What if I need technical support to use the software?

There is a link to the Granicus, Inc. software help page on the City Council Agenda page. It is just above the Upcoming Events Section. The link is titled "Streaming Video Support."



What is Media Manager (video streaming)?

Media Manager is the software that streams the audio/video from the City's broadcast channel onto the internet. Video-streaming technology, also known as web casting, is the process of encoding audio/video files or publishing a live broadcast event to the internet. Instead of watching a television to view a broadcast event, one can view the meeting or programming on their computer via the internet.

What is Minutes Maker (meeting annotation) software?

Minutes Maker is the meeting annotation portion of the Granicus software. The City Secretary’s Office (CSO) uses this software to record the council meeting. CSO uses the council meeting agenda as the base to start recording a meeting. When finished, the CSO has a complete set of minutes for the meeting, which, once approved by the City Council, will be published to the Webcast archive page.

What is RSS?

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. It is a format for content distribution, which allows a user to get automatic updates from multiple web sites whenever new content is published on these sites. It acts like a personal web reader by checking your selected sites regularly for new content. If you set up an RSS feed from the City of Arlington Agenda section, for example, you would be notified whenever a new agenda was posted. The notification takes place in an RSS Reader. You can subscribe to an RSS feed for the agenda and minutes. You can also subscribe to receive Podcast.



For more information about RSS feeds and Podcasting visit the Granicus Help page at <http://portal.knowledgebase.net/al/14791/16069/article.asp?aid=278418&bt=4>

How can you benefit from this technology?

Any citizen can access the website’s video portal to watch any public meeting live or archived with the click of their mouse. This accessibility tool enables citizens to stay connected to city government and track local policy decisions. Controls allow you to jump to any section of a meeting you are interested in; a keyword search makes finding information easier when looking for a certain discussion or agenda item.

Has the technology been used in other jurisdictions?

Granicus streaming solutions are being used by many government organizations. Granicus has a proven track record of providing open access to meetings in more than 350 city and county governments in 35 states. It successfully manages more than 85,000 streams and handles more than one million requests for streaming per month.

How much did the video-streaming solution cost?

The initial contract for software, hardware and installation was \$49,950. This included hardware for internal storage, staff training, software/hardware configuration, website integration and stream-replication software to reduce demands on the City network. A monthly maintenance fee of \$1,600 includes City of Arlington designated bandwidth from Granicus data centers, hosted video storage, equipment maintenance, and software/hardware support.