



# Virtual Public Participation for In-Person Board Meetings

Roll Call for Introductions #20-834



# Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in in-person meetings being prohibited
- The District immediately implemented virtual meetings, using Microsoft Teams, WebEx, and Zoom
- Zoom Webinars have emerged as the preferred platform for Board Meetings
- Zoom Webinars allow two levels of participation, “panelist” and “attendee”
- Panelists can mute and unmute their own audio and video controls
- Attendees’ audio and video capabilities are controlled by the “host”



# Background - Granicus

- For several years the District has used Granicus to live-stream Board Meetings on [bart.gov](http://bart.gov)
- We have continued to utilize this service for virtual meetings
- Conducting virtual meetings while live-streaming involves coordination between the District Secretary's Office, Information Technology, and Communications staff
- Granicus is also the platform that enables integration between electronic agenda packets (Legistar and iLegislate) and meeting video
- Granicus provides a real-time email solution, which is used by other agencies, but it is email only, not oral comments



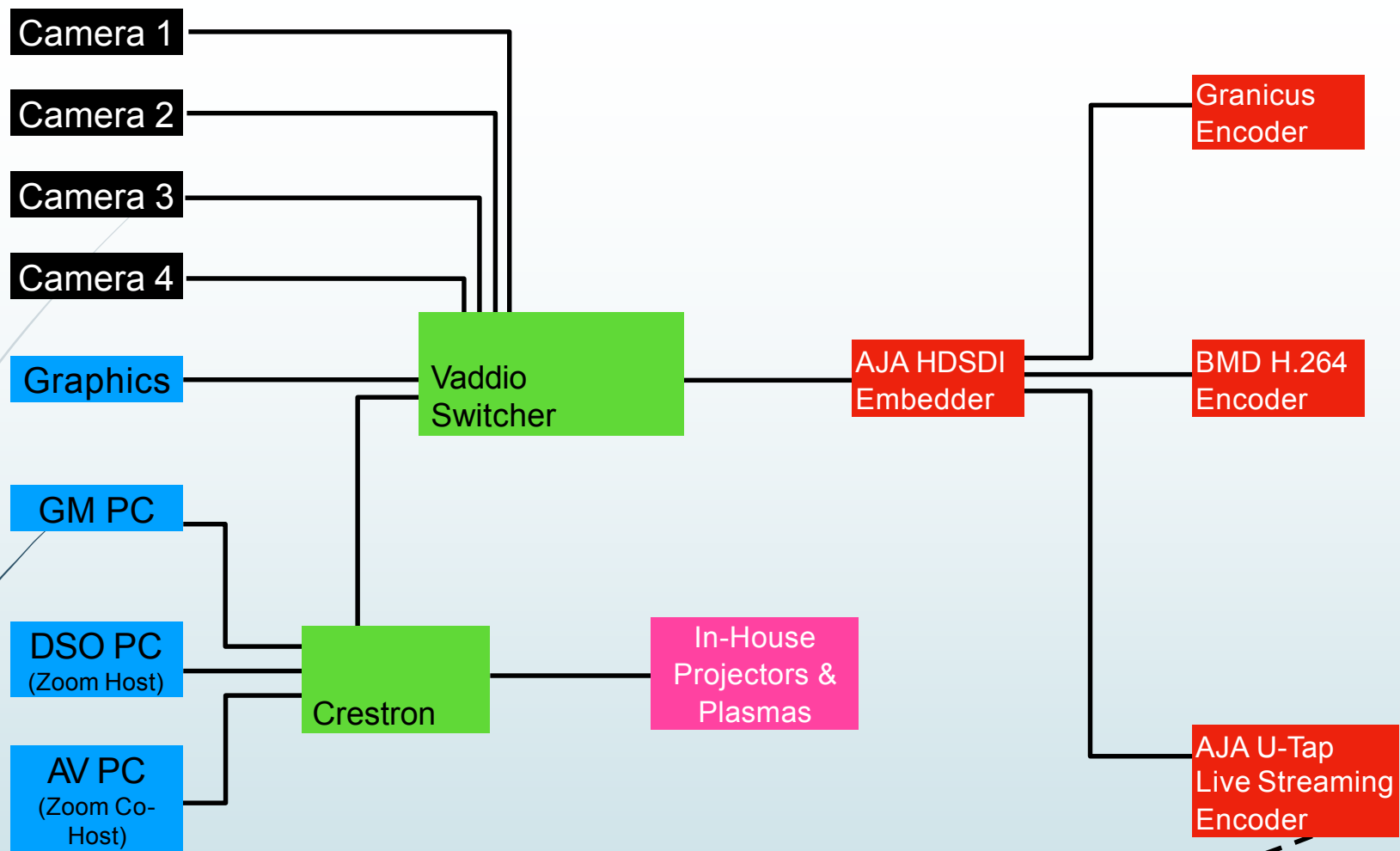
# Issues

- Difficulties have been encountered during virtual meetings
  - The published toll-free call-in number was disabled by Zoom
  - The District has determined that enhanced Zoom Webinar licenses offer the greatest level of security and functionality for Public Meetings. However, a second Zoom Webinar license is required to administer closed session meetings during simultaneous public events. This is because traditional Zoom lobbies, normally used by the Zoom hosts to securely move attendees in and out of meetings, are not available under Webinar accounts, and a single Webinar account can only manage one meeting at a time
  - This means that once the Board goes into closed session and the webinar is “locked” to ensure confidentiality, there is currently no simple mechanism to allow public participation in any subsequent open session
  - There is a significant delay between the Zoom meeting and the live-stream, which can cause confusion and/or feedback if a person is watching the live-stream and wants to call in using Zoom
  - This happens because there is a delay between the signal being picked up, transmitted, and delivered to the receiving device



# Potential Solution

- Communications and IT have coordinated to identify a solution
- The Board Room cameras and two computers will send a signal into a switcher, which in turn sends the signal out to the encoders that enable remote viewing
- Simultaneously, three computers running the Zoom meeting and the presentations send signals inside the Board Room for viewing on the screens
- The input sources must be set up to avoid feedback
- The next page shows the wiring path for the proposed solution in the existing Board Room
- Most of the equipment is currently in place; we will only need to add a few jacks to enable all the computers to run at the same time



- The U-Tap computer must be an input source to avoid audio feedback.
- To avoid video feedback, the U-Tap computer should be “video muted” whenever the a Zoom connected source is in punched up in Program on the Vaddio Switcher.
- In a new installation, dedicated video and audio mixes for Zoom will avoid audio and video feedback.



## Recommended Solution – Short Term

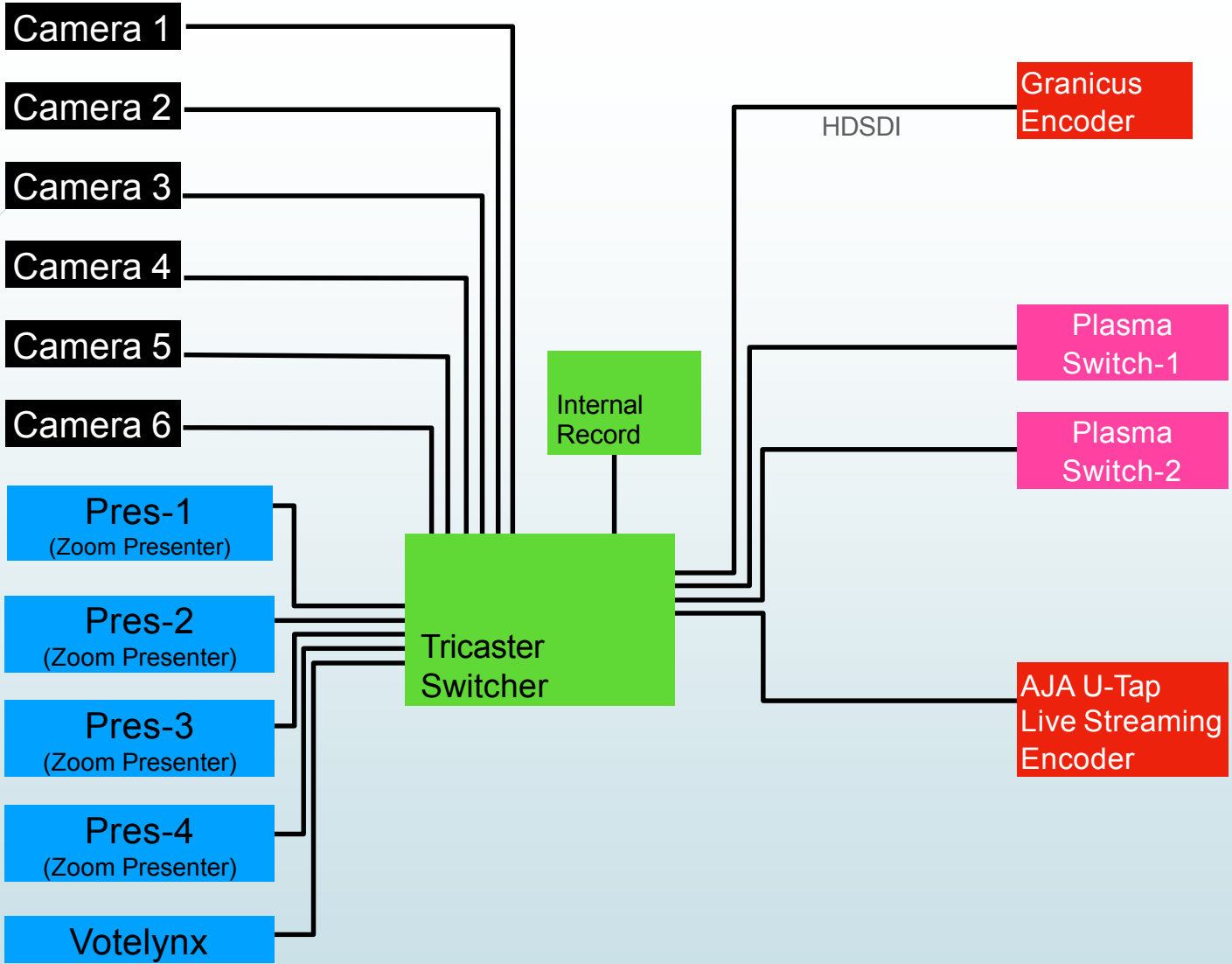
- We are still testing, but it appears we have a workable short-term solution
- Existing Board Room technology allows participation via telephone –
- this is how Directors can participate in Board Meetings when they are away from the District
- We have afforded the public to observe live-streamed meetings for at least 10 years
- We can easily continue to provide a Zoom call-in number on the agenda, and the public (or Directors) can use this number to make comments during the Meetings
- It will be critical, to ensure that there is no feedback or audio delay, to advise remote callers to only use the audio on their phone when calling in
- It is also essential that the public be clearly advised that there can be a delay of up to 30 seconds between real time and the web stream so no one misses the opportunity to make public comment



# Anticipated Long-term Solution

- The DSO, Communications, and IT staff are actively working to procure the most effective equipment for the new Board Room at 2150 Webster
- A schematic of the tentatively planned wiring and equipment is shown on the next slide
- This is still in the very early stages of development







# Questions?

