

Highlights from March 9, 2021 City Council Work Session (2.04: Review and Discuss the Remote Attendance Policy)

- Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report.
- Councilmember Riley asked how the City would know when the pandemic has ended.
- City Administrator Ulrich stated that would refer to the emergency declaration by the Governor.
- Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the public remote attendance noting that can be challenging for staff but appreciates that it provides additional opportunity for residents to participate. He suggested that perhaps that be allowed to continue for six months post-pandemic and then be reviewed after that time.
- Councilmember Specht agreed that he would like to see the limitations put back in place following the pandemic. He stated that he also agreed that this should be left open to allow remote attendance for the public.
- Mayor Kuzma asked for input from staff.
- Deputy City Administrator Gladhill provided details on the staff work that is necessary for remote attendance. He stated that QCTV is available for residents to watch the meeting broadcast live and asked if the remote element would be desired for participation as well. He noted that if participation is desired, there should be additional consideration for IT needs.
- Mayor Kuzma asked if there are additional CARES Act funds that would be available for equipment needs.
- Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that additional funds may be available but believed that was slated for staff time and ongoing resources rather than equipment.
- Councilmember Musgrove recognized that Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stays late to assist with remote meetings and asked if IT staff is also staying late. She asked if staff is being compensated for that time. She noted that some of the items in the policy are being waived because of the emergency declaration. She stated that she would like to return to normal as soon as possible as there is no guidance from the Governor as to how long this will go on.
- Councilmember Heineman asked when the pandemic would be considered over. He stated that he liked the recommendation of staff and suggested that this be reviewed in three to six months rather than linking this to the pandemic terminology because that is ambiguous.
- Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that people are getting more comfortable as more people become vaccinated. He noted that some Commission members will not be comfortable returning until more people are vaccinated. He stated that staff can continue to engage the Commission members to determine their level of comfort for in person meetings.
- Councilmember Howell suggested that this policy be brought back in three to four months to determine what works for the City and removing the language that muddy the waters related to the pandemic.
- Councilmember Heineman agreed that the timeframe would allow the evaluation to be based on the City and conditions and comfort levels at that time rather than linking it to restrictions. He suggested this be reviewed in 90 days.

- Councilmember Musgrove commented that being vaccinated is a medical issue. She stated that it is the choice of an individual as to whether to be vaccinated and the City cannot require proof.
- Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that the City is not going to ask individuals whether they have been vaccinated and it would be more based on the comfort level of individuals.
- Mayor Kuzma confirmed the consensus of the Council to reevaluate this in 90 days. He noted that there also seems to be interest in continuing to allow public participation remotely but recognized that would place an additional burden on staff and resources that would need to be discussed in the future in terms of budgeting and allocation of resources.
- Councilmember Musgrove asked if the Commission members participating remotely still receive a stipend.
- Administrative Services Director Lasher commented that most Commission members receive a stipend of \$25 per meeting but a large number of members waive that payment. She noted that those members are using their own equipment to attend remotely.
- Councilmember Woestehoff referenced Section G, under exceptions, and stated that perhaps language be added that allow a Commission or Council member to attend remotely if they have a medical condition. He noted that would get away from the linkage to the pandemic.
- Councilmember Specht commented that it is important that people attend in person under normal circumstances.
- Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that there are rules around remote participation under normal circumstances outside of a pandemic and reviewed those guidelines.
- City Administrator Ulrich stated that because of the pandemic the State is reviewing rules for remote attendance and there will likely be changes coming down in the future. He stated that staff will bring this back for evaluation in three months.