



Yolo County Housing Commission

Meeting Date: April 27, 2022
Brief Title: AB361 Remote Meeting Authorization
From: Sandra Sigrist, Interim Executive Director
Staff Contact: Jim Gillette, Deputy Director

Subject

Adopt a resolution renewing authorization for remote (teleconference/videoconference) meetings pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 on the basis that (a) the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency is ongoing, and (b) meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees.

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution renewing authorization for remote (teleconference/videoconference) meetings pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 on the basis that (a) the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency is ongoing, and (b) meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees.

Reason for Recommended Action/Background

The recommended action is required by Assembly Bill 361 to continue meeting remotely during a declared state of emergency. The Commission has been meeting remotely pursuant to AB 361 since 2021. AB 361 amended the Brown Act to add simplified procedures that make it easier to hold remote meetings during a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor (a local emergency is insufficient). See Gov. Code § 54953(e). To meet remotely during a proclaimed emergency, the legislative body must find either of the following circumstances is present: (a) state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing; or (b) as a result of the declared emergency, the legislative body finds by majority vote that meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees.

To date, the Commission has relied on the social distancing recommendations of the County Health Officer in adopting AB 361 findings. Like many other county health officers, however, Dr. Sisson is no longer recommending social distancing and the Board must therefore consider the "imminent risks" finding to continue meeting remotely. The attached resolution includes facts and conclusions sufficient to support such a finding, including:

- Like many other facilities throughout the County, the Board Chambers were not designed to ensure that attendees can remain six feet apart to reduce the possibility of infection with the virus that causes COVID-19;
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Commission meetings could attract significant attendance and community members and staff would be in close proximity (seated or standing immediately next to one another) for several hours; and
- Holding in-person meetings would encourage community members to come to County facilities to participate in local government, and some of them are likely to be at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 and/or live with someone who is at high risk.

On these grounds, staff believe the Commission can appropriately make the findings necessary to allow continued implementation of AB361.

Looking ahead, the risks mentioned above could be reduced significantly through the implementation of technological improvements to allow hybrid meetings with limited in-person attendance, assuming (as staff expect) that such improvements reduce in-person attendance enough to allow social distancing. Staff anticipate such improvements may be available in County Board Chambers in the near future and, at that point, the Commission could appropriately reconsider the "imminent risk" finding and commence hybrid meetings. It is possible the May meeting could be held as hybrid meetings and we will work closely with the Chair and Vice-Chair to identify and announce a date of return.

Under the hybrid approach, most or all Commission members and essential staff would attend in-person, and other staff and members of the public would likely choose to participate remotely for the sake of convenience. A continued decline in community case rates could also support revisiting the "imminent risk" finding in the near future. Staff would also take reasonable precautions in the County Board Chambers including:

- Physical distancing - in a hybrid format staff would set up the Board Chambers to have physical distancing where at least every other seat for the public is out of service to ensure distance between attendees.
- Air Filtration – Staff have added HEPA filtration to the Board Chambers to ensure filtration of air to remove viral particles

The Commission could also direct staff to implement other precautions as appropriate such as plexiglass barriers and face coverings, as well as mandatory attendee testing (if legally viable).

Attachment:

Resolution