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DAWN MCINTOSH
City Attorney

February 7, 2023

GARY J. ANDERSON
Assistant City Attorney

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution making findings pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e)(3) to authorize City legislative bodies to follow the teleconference meeting provisions of Government Code Section 54953(e)(1)-(2). (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

On September 30, 2021, the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) "waivers" for teleconference meetings of legislative bodies contained within the Governor of California's Executive Order N-08-21 expired. Beginning October 1, 2021, the Government Code was amended to allow for similar practices during declared states of emergency where certain requirements are met.

In order to allow teleconference and hybrid meetings with "waivers" to continue, the City Council must make findings every 30 days reconsidering the circumstances of the state of emergency, and find that state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing. The Long Beach Health Officer continues to recommend teleconference meetings, to the extent possible or practical, of the City's legislative bodies, to promote social distancing measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 for the protection of the community, staff, presenters, and legislative body members.

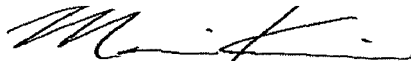
If adopted, the attached Resolution would make such findings pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e)(3) to authorize City legislative bodies to follow the teleconference meeting provisions of Government Code Section 54953(e)(1)-(2).

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

DAWN MCINTOSH, City Attorney

By 

Monica J. Kilaita
Deputy City Attorney

MJK:kjm

ATTACHMENT: CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

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RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH MAKING FINDINGS PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)(3) TO AUTHORIZE CITY LEGISLATIVE BODIES TO FOLLOW THE TELECONFERENCE MEETING PROVISIONS OF GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)(1)-(2)

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-25-20 which, among other things, took the unprecedented action of temporarily suspending certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act ("Brown Act") in light of the spread of COVID-19, an ongoing public health state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order N-25-20 still required legislative bodies to provide a publicly accessible location from which members of the public would be able to observe a public meeting and offer public comment during a meeting; and

WHEREAS, as such, on March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20, which further suspended various requirements of the Brown Act for public meetings, and replaced the Brown Act portion of Executive Order N-25-20 in its entirety; most notably, legislative bodies were no longer required to provide a physical location for the public to observe or provide public comment during a public meeting; and

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2021, the Governor issued Executive Order N-08-21, which, among other things, replaced the Brown Act portion of Executive Order N-29-20, but still allowed for certain Brown Act temporary suspensions, such as not having to provide a physical location for the public to observe or provide public comment during a public meeting and allowing all legislative body members to participate from outside the body's jurisdictional boundaries, and stated that such suspensions would expire on September 30, 2021; and

1 WHEREAS, beginning on October 1, 2021, State legislation amending the
2 Government Code has allowed for similar “waivers” regarding teleconference meetings
3 under the Brown Act during declared states of emergency where certain conditions are
4 met; and

5 WHEREAS, the Government Code amendments provide key “waivers” of
6 normal teleconferencing requirements including, but not limited to, the ability of a
7 legislative body to allow public access and comment via phone or internet only and to
8 allow even a quorum of the legislative body to take meetings from locations outside the
9 body’s jurisdictional boundaries without specifying the location or posting agendas at
10 each teleconference location; and

11 WHEREAS, this legislation still provides public participation safeguards,
12 such as requiring the legislative body to conduct teleconference meetings in a way that
13 protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties and public appearing before
14 the legislative body; requiring that the legislative body take no further action if there is a
15 disruption that prevents the agency from broadcasting the meeting to the public using the
16 call-in or internet-based service option, or if there’s a disruption within the agency’s
17 control which prevents members of the public from offering public comment using the
18 call-in or internet-based service option; not requiring public comments to be submitted in
19 advance of the meeting and providing the public opportunity to address the legislative
20 body and offer comment in real time; and the like; and

21 WHEREAS, in order to apply these amended teleconferencing standards
22 with “waivers”, there are certain conditions which must be met; and

23 WHEREAS, first, one of the following three conditions to be met by the
24 legislative body: (1) the legislative body holds a meeting during a proclaimed state of
25 emergency, and state or local officials have imposed or recommended measures to
26 promote social distancing; (2) the legislative body holds a meeting during a proclaimed
27 state of emergency for the purpose of determining, by a majority vote, whether as a result
28 of the emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks of health or safety of

1 attendees; or (3) the legislative body holds a meeting during a proclaimed state of
2 emergency and has determined, by a majority vote, that as a result of the emergency,
3 meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees; and

4 WHEREAS, currently, there is a continuing state of emergency concerning
5 the COVID-19 pandemic at both the State and City of Long Beach levels, and, on
6 September 30, 2021, the City of Long Beach Health Officer issued an initial
7 recommendation for the continuation of virtual public meetings, to the extent possible, in
8 order to promote social distancing measures for the protection of the community, staff,
9 presenters, and legislative body members; and

10 WHEREAS, the City's Health Officer has since issued revised
11 recommendations continuing to recommend virtual public meetings, to the extent
12 possible, in order to promote social distancing measures due to COVID-19, and such
13 recommendation currently remains in place; and

14 WHEREAS, second, a legislative body must also make the following
15 findings every 30 days by a majority vote: (1) the legislative body has reconsidered the
16 circumstances of the state of emergency; and (2) either the state of emergency continues
17 to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person, or state or local
18 officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing; and

19 WHEREAS, the City Council now desires to, again, make the required
20 monthly findings as specified in Government Code section 54953(e)(3) in order to allow
21 the City Council, and all City commissions, committees, boards, or other bodies subject
22 to the Brown Act, to continue to hold meetings pursuant to the teleconference
23 requirements of Government Code section 54953(e)(1)-(2); and

24 WHEREAS, the City Council also desires to authorize the City Council, and
25 City commissions, committees, boards, or other bodies subject to the Brown Act, to opt
26 for in-person and/or hybrid (a combination of virtual and in-person) meetings to the extent
27 possible based on varying circumstances, including but not limited to meetings that may
28 be of a quasi-judicial nature or those bodies that have already been meeting in person as

1 circumstances have allowed, and to do so while complying with the City Health Officer's
2 recommended protocols, wherever feasible;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Long Beach resolves as
4 follows:

5 Section 1. Pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e)(3), the City
6 Council hereby reconsiders the state of emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic and finds
7 that the City Health Officer continues to recommend measures to promote social
8 distancing such as remote meetings of legislative bodies. The City Health Officer's
9 current recommendation is attached hereto as Attachment "A".

10 Section 2. The City Council authorizes the Council and all City of Long
11 Beach legislative bodies, including all City commissions, committees, and boards, to
12 continue to hold teleconference meetings in accordance with Government Code section
13 54953(e)(1)-(2).

14 Section 3. The City Council recognizes that City legislative bodies may
15 have varying circumstances and considerations and, as such, hereby authorizes the
16 Council, and City commissions, committees, boards, or other bodies subject to the Brown
17 Act, to opt for in-person and/or hybrid (a combination of virtual and in-person) meetings to
18 the extent possible, including but not limited to meetings that may be of a quasi-judicial
19 nature or those bodies that have already been meeting in person as circumstances have
20 allowed. Such meetings must comply (wherever feasible) with the Health Officer's
21 recommendation with respect to any protocols for in-person meetings.

22 Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption
23 by the City Council, and the City Clerk shall certify the vote adopting this resolution.

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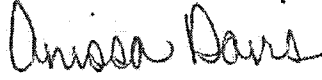
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ATTACHMENT "A"

Date: January 27, 2023

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager

From: Dr. Anissa Davis, Long Beach Health Officer 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council and all Boards and Commissions

Subject: **Recommendation Regarding Physical Distancing, Optional Virtual/Hybrid Meetings, and In-Person Meeting Practices**

Assembly Bill 361 (AB 361), which became effective on October 1, 2021, allows for certain waivers of Brown Act teleconference requirements during declared states of emergency when certain conditions have been met. These “waivers” promote physical distancing to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by allowing legislative body members to take meetings from outside the body’s jurisdictional boundaries, as well as allowing public access and comment through phone and/or internet services only, among other things which seek to protect the community and staff. One condition to authorize such virtual meetings of legislative bodies is that state or local health officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote physical distancing during a proclaimed state of emergency.

I am issuing these revised recommendations for the City’s legislative bodies to continue to meet virtually, if feasible, under the relevant provisions of AB 361. I have further included recommended practices during in-person meetings of legislative bodies. These recommendations should be forwarded to those bodies.

I strongly recommend that physical distancing measures continue to be practiced throughout Long Beach communities, including at meetings of the City’s various legislative bodies, to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing, masking, staying home when sick, and frequent handwashing remain crucial infection control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including its variants.

To the extent possible, virtual meetings are recommended as they allow for the participation of the community, City staff, presenters, Councilmembers, commissioners, committee members, and board members with no risk of contagion. As an alternative, a legislative body may hold a hybrid meeting (i.e., a meeting that are both in-person and virtual) with infection control measures outlined below to minimize the spread of COVID-19 while partially operating in-person.

Where legislative bodies hold in-person meetings based on varying circumstances, I strongly recommend that infection control measures are implemented, if possible or where mandated, including: (1) where feasible, maintaining at least six-foot physical distance from other individuals, even when wearing a face mask; (2) washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, as frequently as possible; (3) covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve, elbow, or tissue, not hands); (4)

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regularly cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces; (5) avoiding physically intimate forms of greeting such as shaking hands, hugging, and kissing; (6) staying home when sick; (7) to the extent feasible, avoiding eating and drinking in public places; and (8) wearing a face mask securely over one's mouth and nose.

I will continue to evaluate this recommendation on an ongoing basis and this recommendation will remain in place until amended, replaced, or repealed. If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
KEVIN JACKSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
REBECCA G. GARNER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS