



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0169, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to identify and implement health and safety protocols to allow the Mayor and City Council to resume in-person Council meetings within 30 days.

On March 12, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20, which, among other provisions, waived or suspended certain portions of the Brown Act and Bagley-Keene Act to allow local legislative bodies to hold public meetings via teleconference. These actions were in conjunction with the State of Emergency proclaimed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help promote social distancing.

Since that time, the Long Beach City Council has conducted our meetings via teleconference, with the Mayor and each Councilmember participating from remote locations. Members of the public are also not allowed to attend Council meetings in person and may participate telephonically or electronically.

The City Manager, City Clerk and certain City staff essential to the proper functioning of the Council meetings continue to attend the meetings in person in the Civic Chambers, while practicing safety protocols, including physical distancing and mask wearing.

While these measures were appropriate given the circumstances, the teleconference council meetings have also had some drawbacks, including preventing the public from seeing their representatives as they discuss and deliberate policy matters, and numerous technical difficulties that are inherent in remote meetings, such as dropped internet or phone connections.

The U.S. Congress, State Legislature and several cities in California, have resumed in-person public meetings, while following safety guidelines, including wearing masks.

The Mayor and many, if not all, of the City Council members have now received the COVID-19 vaccine, consistent with the continuity of government criteria for Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution. By being vaccinated, with second doses expected to take place this month, the risk for the Mayor and Councilmembers to participate in in-person meetings is significantly reduced, provided that additional health and safety protocols remain in place.

Given the benefits to the public and the improved efficiency and flow of deliberations by having in-person Council meetings, we request the City Manager to work with our health officials to identify and implement health and safety protocols that would allow the Mayor and City Council to resume conducting in-person Council meetings.

With restrictions on public events still in place, members of the public would continue to participate telephonically or electronically until the state and out health officer deem it safe and appropriate to lift restrictions on public events.

A fiscal impact analysis was not able to be conducted for this item due to the time sensitivity of placing it on the agenda.

Approve recommendation.

AL AUSTIN
COUNCILMAN, EIGHTH DISTRICT

DARYL SUPERNAW
COUNCILMAN, FOURTH DISTRICT

STACY MUNGO
COUNCILWOMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT