



Memorandum

Date: November 10, 2021

To: Civil Service Commission

From: Christina Pizarro Winting

Subject: **UPDATE: COVID – 19 IMPACT TO CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION BUSINESS**

BACKGROUND

On March 4, 2020 the City of Long Beach and the City Health Officer declared a state of emergency. Staff quickly shifted to begin their working from home assignment and they have successfully navigated this new approach over the past 20 months. The Civil Service Commission has also shifted to the new approach and continued their business through virtual meetings as needed. The Commission has also been very responsive to the needs of City departments by increasing their meeting schedule through critical times. The most recent decision to continue meeting every other week while the City continues to be impacted by the COVID -19 pandemic.

IMPACTS TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

With the expiration of Executive Order N-08-21 on September 30, 2021 which had provided the guidelines for public meetings in the midst of the emergency, the implementation of AB 361 on October 1, 2021 now guides the Commission with their meetings. AB361, provides the ability to utilize teleconference means for conducting meetings allowing for social distancing which has been recommended by the City Health Officer. With the Commission's decision to meet virtually when there is not a disciplinary hearing and meet in person when a disciplinary hearing is scheduled a good balance has been established.

The Commission will need to revisit the decision every 30 days as required by the legislation beginning with 30 days from the first teleconference meeting of November 10, 2021. The Commission will use the following criteria to determine if the teleconferencing should continue:

"The legislative body has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency; and one of the following circumstances exists: The state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person; or State or City officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing."



The City Attorney has stated in a memo to staff that the Council may set this direction, or, “As such, pursuant to AB 361, should the Council not take such action on behalf of all City bodies, the individual bodies may authorize the “waivers” in the same manner and on a monthly basis as they see fit.” Staff will be sure to place an item on the Commission agenda every thirty days to take a vote as to the continued use of teleconference meetings.

DEPARTMENT REQUESTS

Departments will continue to bring requests to the Commission for extension of probation and extension of non-career hours due to the impact from COVID-19. Certifications by state agencies are being held up due to limited access to the agencies and making the conditions of probation challenging to meet. In addition, staff all over the City have utilized non-career staff to temporarily provide additional staffing while permanent staff is reassigned to emergency operations or Long Beach Recovery Act programs. The Department of Health and Human Services in particular, has a high number of non-career employees assisting with providing direct service for many COVID – 19 related programs and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Civil Service staff is prepared to work with departments in these two areas and continue to bring requests before the Commission for consideration.

DISCIPLINARY APPEAL HEARINGS

Staff has been working with all involved with the disciplinary hearings to schedule hearings to ensure that the disciplinary appeals are heard. Recent meetings with the attorneys have produced a schedule of hearings through September 2022. Staff will be sure to schedule hearings in facilities that provide adequate social distancing and will be make sure to follow all COVID-19 protocols.

PREPARATION FOR POTENTIAL SURGES

Staff believes that they are ready to handle any surges that may occur. Throughout the last 20 months protocols have been put into place and staff has continued to work effectively from home, minimizing in person contact with customers. In addition, the City Safety Officer has been very supportive and proactive in providing updates to City staff regarding new protocols to keep all employees as safe as possible. We will be sure to keep the Commission informed should there be any surges identified by the City Safety Officer or City Health Officer.

