



AGENDA ITEM
CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE – SEPTEMBER 21, 2021
BUSINESS ITEMS

TO : City Council

FROM : City Manager

SUBJECT : **COVID-19 PROTOCOLS FOR CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the August 17, 2021 City Council meeting, Council directed staff to discuss protocols for reopening Council Chambers and bring this item back for further discussion and direction.

The current Governor's order that relaxes the Brown Act requirements related to teleconferencing expires on September 30, 2021. On September 10, 2021, the California Senate passed Assembly Bill (AB) 361, which essentially extends the same provisions of the Governor's order until January 1, 2024. The Governor has 12 days to approve, approve without signing, or to veto the bill. If approved, the bill will go into effect immediately.

In light of the resurgence of COVID-19 cases and new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the State of California, staff recommends that the City Council continue to conduct virtual meetings for the next 6 weeks and thereafter, until the City is not in the substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC, for a 30-day period. This would be reviewed by Council after six weeks and thereafter upon referral by the City Manager.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that Council direct staff by motion to continue to conduct virtual meetings for the next 6 weeks and thereafter, until the City is not in the substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC, for a 30-day period. This will be reviewed by Council after six weeks and thereafter upon referral by the City Manager. This recommendation is given with the assumption that AB 361 is approved by the Governor.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

There are no budget impacts associated with this item.

BACKGROUND:

At the August 17, 2021 City Council meeting, City Council discussed their preferences and direction on reopening the Council Chambers at City Hall for City Council meetings and directed

staff to discuss protocols for reopening Council Chambers and to bring this item back for further discussion and direction.

The current Governor’s order that relaxes the Brown Act requirements related to teleconferencing expires on September 30, 2021. On September 10, 2021, the California Senate passed Assembly Bill (AB) 361, which essentially extends the same provisions of the Governor’s order until January 1, 2024. The Governor has 12 days to approve, approve without signing, or to veto the bill. If approved, the bill will go into effect immediately.

Assuming that AB 361 is approved by the Governor, staff recommends that the City Council continue to conduct virtual meetings for the next 6 weeks and thereafter, until the City is not in the substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC, for a 30-day period. This will be reviewed by Council after six weeks and thereafter upon referral by the City Manager. This recommendation is made in light of the resurgence of COVID-19 cases and new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the State of California.

NEXT STEPS:

If Council concurs with staff’s recommendation, then City Council meetings will continue to be held virtually and this item will be brought back to the City Council for consideration in 6 weeks.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:

Council could choose to direct staff to open the Council Chambers as soon as is feasible for City Council meetings with direction as to COVID-19 protocols.

General Plan	Goal 4.1: Make community health and safety a high priority for Benicia
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Priority Based Budgeting	Strategic City Result Impacted by this Agenda Item
	The City Council and community identified six (6) key “Results” that establish the key goals for which the City of Benicia aspires to achieve with our programs and services. Agenda Items often influence multiple Results, the primary Result impacted by this Agenda Item is (please check one):
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protect Community Health & Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain & Enhance A High Quality of Life <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve & Enhance Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen Economic & Fiscal Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Protect & Enhance the Environment <input type="checkbox"/> High Performing Government
	City Programs Impacted by This Agenda Item (Top 3):
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City Council Policy Development – City Manager’s Office 2. Community Engagement and Public Relations – City Manager’s Office

CEQA Analysis	Pursuant to Title 14, the California Code of Regulations, Section 15378(b)(5) of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) guidelines, the proposed action is an administrative activity of the City that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.
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ATTACHMENTS:

None

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