



Department Source: Law

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 19, 2021

Re: Draft Ordinance for Virtual Meetings and Virtual Public Participation

Executive Summary

The attached draft ordinance would establish the authority for all boards and commissions as well as the public to hold and attend meetings virtually during any period of declared state of emergency.

Discussion

At the March 15, 2021 City Council meeting, the Council requested a draft ordinance be prepared and presented as a report for the April 19th Council meeting. Staff was directed to utilize the guidance provided by the Disabilities Commission in their communication to Council dated February 11, 2021. The draft ordinance and the communication from the Disabilities Commission are provided for Council consideration and direction as to the next steps.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: A complete financial analysis has not been performed. The cost of additional equipment and software is anticipated to be less than \$50,000; however, a software vendor that can meet the City's requirements for public participation and ADA accessibility has not yet been identified. Most boards and commissions will require an additional staff member to be present during the meeting to handle the virtual meeting and public participation logistics if the meeting is fully virtual. The availability of at least one (1) IT staff member will also be required to assist with technical issues. It has yet to be determined whether the additional staff would be funded through overtime compensation or a reduction of other duties.

Long-Term Impact: Unknown.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Operational Excellence, Secondary Impact: Public Safety, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Legislative History

Date	Action
04/06/2020	B89-20/Ordinance 024208 Enactment of temporary rules for the submission of public comments
05/18/2020	B107-20 Repealing Ordinance 024208 relating to the temporary rules for submission of public comments
10/05/2020	REP57-20 Council Report on Virtual Meetings
01/19/2021	B45-21 Appropriation of funds to approve purchase of additional equipment and software for video conferencing
03/01/2021	REP18-21 from Disabilities Commission

Suggested Council Action

Staff has no recommendation. However, if Council desires to move forward with authorizing virtual public participation, it would be advisable for the rules governing public comment to be reviewed/revise to ensure adequate public access for both in-person and virtual public participants.