



Legislation Text

File #: 21-1195, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 16, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Resolution Adopting an Updated Electronic Meeting Policy for the City Council. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

ISSUE: Consideration of an update to the City Council's Electronic Meeting Policy.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt the attached resolution and policy that will be effective as of July 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND: On November 24, 2015, City Council adopted an electronic meeting policy pursuant to the authority for such policies provided for in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The electronic meeting policy allows for members of the City Council to participate, including voting, in a meeting electronically if there is a quorum of body in the room for a medical reason, or for a personal reason for a limited number of meetings. In the 2021 General Assembly session, the FOIA law was updated to expand the medical reasons and to allow for an additional number of meetings a member can attend electronically for a personal reason.

DISCUSSION: The updated policy adds the additional authority provided by the recent amendment to FOIA to the City Council's policy and also clarifies the language of the policy. A comparison showing the changes from the previous policy to the policy proposed for your consideration is attached for your review as attachment 2.

The new policy allows for:

- Members to attend meetings electronically for an unlimited number of meetings for a members medical condition or a family members medical condition that requires the member to provide care for the family member.
- Members to attend meetings electronically for 2 meetings or 25% of the total meetings rounded up to the next whole number for a personal reason. City Council has approximately 30 meetings a year at a

minimum so this would allow city council members to attend electronically 8 times a year. Since City Council typically has about 12 work sessions a year, that number could increase to closer to 11 times a year. The actual number would be based on the actual number of meetings the City Council has in the year the policy is being applied.

This policy requires there to still be a quorum of the public body in person so no more than 3 members can attend electronically at any meeting. This is different than the emergency meeting authority which allows City Council to have a fully virtual meeting when there is a declaration of emergency. Additionally, City Council members are still able to be absent for an excused absence. Excused absences are not affected by this policy. Participating in a meeting electronically pursuant to this policy is not considered absent from the meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution with Updated Electronic Meeting Policy Attached

Attachment 2: Comparison of previous policy to proposed policy

STAFF:

Joanna C. Anderson, City Attorney