



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Jennifer Gorsuch, Administrative Services Director

RE: Remote Meeting Participation

January 16, 2018

From time to time, the question regarding remote meeting participation has surfaced from staff as well as a Planning Commission member.

Remote participation in meetings has been deemed a permissible practice for a governing body under the Open Public Meetings Act. Certain criteria must be met such as:

- Governing body has given permission
- Member's voice can be heard by all present at meeting, including the public
- Member can hear all that is stated at the meeting
- Member can participate effectively in the meeting

If a governing body decides to allow participation by telephone or video, it is advisable to authorize that in the body's governing rules, including the circumstances by which it is allowable. Written rules that set forth these circumstances should be created and should include guidelines.

Some possible guidelines include:

- limit the number of times allowable in a year
- extraordinary circumstances only
- whether it is acceptable for an extended period of time due to illness
- applicable to all governing bodies or Council only

Attached is a listing of some agencies in Washington who do have rules allowing for remote participation. Also attached are a few samples from those agencies. This is provided for general information and discussion purposes.

Staff would like direction on whether or not Council would like us to proceed with drafting up such rules for consideration and approval.