

Virtual Board and Commission Meetings

Current Status of Exemptions and Pilot Project

- Governor renewed the COVID-19 Disaster Declaration in July
 - Allows all current exemptions to TOMA to remain in place.
- Governor has approved a request from the Attorney General to lift the suspensions starting September 1, 2021. Reinstating:
 - Requirement for the presiding officer to be physically present
 - Eliminating the option for audio testimony
 - Technical Requirements for remote video meetings
- Pilot project for limited remote options was tested prior to the pandemic with the Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission

Can Board and Commissions continue to conduct meetings remotely or a hybrid of in-person and virtual.

- TOMA does provide governmental bodies an option for video conferencing during meetings. Section 551.127 Video Conference Call reads: "A member or employee of a governmental body may participate remotely in a meeting of the governmental body by means of a videoconference call if the video and audio feed of the member's or employee's participation, as applicable, is broadcast live at the meeting and complies with the provisions of this section."
- Other provisions of [Section 551.127](#) that apply are:
 - A meeting held by videoconference call must meet the regular notice requirements of the Act.
 - A governmental body that extends into three or more counties may meet by videoconference call only if the member of the governmental body presiding over the meeting is physically present at one location of the meeting.
 - Notice of the meeting must specify that location, which must be open to the public during the open portions of the meeting, as well as state the intent to have the member of the governmental body presiding over the meeting present there.
 - The location where the presiding member is physically present must be open to the public during the open portions of the meeting.

Technical Requirements

- The meeting location where the quorum or presiding member is present as well as each remote location from which a member participates “shall have two-way audio and video communication with each other location during the entire meeting.”
- While speaking, each participant’s face must be clearly visible, and the voice audible to each other participant and to the members of the public in attendance at the location where the quorum or presiding member is present and any other location of the meeting that is open to the public.
 - Board and Commission members would need to ensure their video and audio feeds meet the requirements outlined by Department of Information Resources to ensure they have both quality video and audio on their end.
- Requires that each open portion of the meeting is to be visible and audible to the public at the meeting location where the quorum or presiding member is present and that, at any time that the meeting is no longer visible and audible to the public, the meeting must be recessed until the problem is resolved.
- If the audio or video communication is lost for any portion of the meeting, the remote participant is considered absent during that time.
- Permits a governmental body to allow a member of the public to testify at a meeting from a remote location by videoconference call.

City Code Chapter 2-1 Requirements

- Section 2-1-3 (D): To the extent not otherwise required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 551 or other state or federal law or rule, all temporary and permanent boards, commissions, and task forces not included in this chapter and that are established solely by council shall comply with Chapter 551 (Open Meetings Act). This subsection does not apply to working groups.
- Section 2-1-6(E): All members necessary to provide a quorum must be physically present at a meeting to conduct business.

Scheduling/Location of Meetings

- Currently all virtual meetings are being “hosted” here at City Hall
 - Requires B/C to be flexible from month to month on dates, times and length of meetings
 - Schedules are planned week to week to accommodate Council and B/C needs
 - Increased demands as City Hall is re-integrating and staff are coming back for meeting space
 - Uncertainty of additional locations that are available that could accommodate virtual meetings

CTM Technology Upgrades

Funding Required

Chamber Rm 1001	\$204,000.00
Boards and Commissions Rm 1101	\$150,000.00
Large Staff Bull Pen Rm 1029	\$150,000.00
Executive Session Rm 1027	\$100,000.00
CTM Total:	\$604,000.00

Personnel Requirements for CTM

Audio/Video Consultant *Existing FTE	\$120,000.00
Audio/Video Support Analyst Sr. *Existing FTE	\$99,000.00
Audio/Video Support Analyst *New FTE Request	\$95,000.00
Audio/Video Support Analyst *New FTE Request	\$95,001.00
Audio/Video Contractor *Existing Contractor	\$68,000.00
Total for CTM:	\$477,001.00

ATXN Technology Upgrades

Funding Required

Chamber Rm 1001	\$7,000.00
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Boards and Commissions Rm 1101	\$7,000.00
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Large Staff Bull Pen Rm 1029	\$12,000.00
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Executive Session Rm 1027	\$12,000.00
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Total for ATXN:	\$38,000.00
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Personnel Requirements for ATXN

ATXN

Television Engineer	\$100,000.00
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Production Specialist	\$95,000.00
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Master Control Supervisor	\$99,000.00
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Total:	\$294,000.00
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Software, Maintenance, Support & Service Costs

CTM: Software and A/V Maintenance/Support – Annual Costs

Annual Audio/Video Maintenance and Advanced Support	\$ 25,000.00
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Tele-Town Hall Public Input SaaS	\$240,000.00
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Webex Licensing SaaS	\$ 40,000.00
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CTM Total:	\$305,000.00
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ATXN Services and Maintenance/Support - Annual Costs

Streaming	\$ 36,000.00
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Archive Indexing and Web posting	\$ 70,000.00
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Closed Captioning	\$120,000.00
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Equipment Maintenance	\$ 60,000.00
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ATXN Total:	\$286,000.00
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Current Steps and Questions

- Staff are working on determining capacity and board/commissions to be hosted at:
 - City Hall
 - New Development Center
 - New Austin Energy Building
- What options Council would have with waiving TOMA requirements for presiding officer?
- Council's preference on the scope of the project
 - All boards and commission or select boards and commissions
 - All members or less than a quorum of the board or commission
 - All virtual or hybrid meetings
 - Planned or changing from meeting to meeting

QUESTIONS