

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**SUBJECT:** DISRUPTION OF MEETINGS**EFFECTIVE:** July 1, 2026**1. PURPOSE**

This policy establishes procedures for responding to a disruption in either the two-way telephonic or two-way audiovisual platform, or both, that provides remote public access to meetings of the City Council, as required by the Ralph M. Brown Act (“Brown Act”) as well as responding to disruptive members of the public during meetings. The policy helps ensure transparency, public participation, and the continuation of meetings during technological disruptions.

2. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Disrupting” means behavior that actually disrupts, disturbs, impedes, or renders infeasible the orderly conduct of the meeting and includes, but is not limited to, one of the following:
 - a. A failure to comply with reasonable and lawful regulations pursuant to California Government Code section 54954.3 or any other law or any applicable City policy.
 - b. Engaging in behavior that constitutes use of force or a true threat of force (which means a threat that has sufficient indicia of intent and seriousness, that a reasonable observer would perceive it to be an actual threat to use force by the person making the threat.)
- B. “Service disruption” means any failure, outage, or other interruption to the City’s remote access services that prevents members of the public from participating in a City Council meeting through the remote access service.
- C. “Remote access services” means the two-way telephonic service of the meeting and/or two-way audiovisual platform used to provide real-time remote public attendance and observation of meetings
- D. “Two-way audiovisual platform” means an online platform that provides participants with the ability to participate in a meeting via both an interactive video conference and a two-way telephonic service.
- E. “Two-way telephonic service” means a telephone service that does not require internet access and allows participants to dial a telephone number to listen and verbally participate.

3. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all open and public meetings of the City Council at which remote public participation is required under the Brown Act. Consistent with the Brown Act, this policy shall not apply to the following meetings:

- a. Meetings held to attend a judicial or administrative proceeding to which the City is a party.
- b. Meetings held to inspect real or personal property provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the real or personal property.
- c. Meetings held to meet with elected or appointed officials of the United States or the State of California, solely to discuss a legislative or regulatory issue affecting the City and over which the federal or state officials have jurisdiction.
- d. Meetings held to meet in or nearby a facility owned by the City, provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the facility.
- e. Meetings held in an emergency situation pursuant to California Government Code section 54956.5.

4. REMOTE PUBLIC ACCESS GENERALLY

When remote public access is required under the Brown Act, the City Council shall provide members of the public with an opportunity to attend and participate in the meeting using a two-way audiovisual platform or a two-way telephonic service with , provided that adequate telephonic or internet service is operational at the meeting location.

If adequate telephonic or audiovisual service is not operational at the meeting location, the City Council shall not be required to provide remote access. If adequate telephonic or audiovisual service is operational for only a portion of the meeting, the City Council shall provide remote access during that portion of the meeting.

If a two-way audiovisual platform is used, the City Council shall:

- a. Publicly post and provide a call-in option as well; and
- b. Activate any automatic captioning function that is available in the audiovisual platform.

If a two-way audiovisual platform is not provided, the City Council shall provide a two-way telephonic service.

Members of the public participating remotely shall be provided the same opportunity to provide public comment as members of the public attending in person, including the same time allotment.

5. RESPONSE TO SERVICE DISRUPTION

If the Presiding Officer or City Clerk becomes aware of a service disruption:

- a. The Presiding Officer, or City Clerk shall immediately announce the service disruption to the public.
- b. The Presiding Officer shall call for a recess of the open session and may convene the legislative body in an authorized closed session, consistent with the Brown Act (including closed session notice and public comment requirements if not already satisfied). The recess shall last for one hour or until service is restored, whichever is earlier.
- c. During the recess, City staff shall make a good faith effort to diagnose and restore the disrupted service.

6. RECONVENING THE OPEN SESSION

After the expiration of the hour, if service has not been restored, the Presiding Officer or City Clerk shall report on the status of staff's efforts to restore remote access services, and the City Council may reconvene to:

- a. Adjourn the meeting;
- b. Extend the recess to allow staff more time to make a good faith effort to restore remote access services; or
- c. Continue the open session portion of the meeting by adopting, by roll call vote, the following or a substantially similar finding:

“The City has made good faith efforts to restore telephonic or internet service in accordance with its adopted policy, and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.”

Upon adoption of the finding, the City Council may continue the open session portion of the meeting even though remote access services have not been restored.

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7. RECORDKEEPING

The City Clerk or their designee shall enter a brief statement into the meeting minutes, including:

- The nature and time of the service disruption;
- The time the meeting was reconvened (if applicable);
- Any finding adopted pursuant to Section 6 of this policy.

8. RESPONSE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC DISRUPTING A MEETING

If the Presiding Officer or City Clerk becomes aware of a member of the public who is attending the meeting either in-person or through remote access services and is disrupting the meeting or otherwise preventing other members of the public from attending or observing the meeting remotely or in-person:

- a. The Presiding Officer or City Clerk shall warn the person that he/she is disrupting the meeting and his/her failure to cease that behavior may result in his/her removal.
- b. If the person to whom the Presiding Officer or City Clerk gave the above warning persists in disrupting the meeting, the Presiding Officer shall order staff to:
 - i. mute or otherwise limit the individual's ability to disrupt the meeting (including by muting the individual and/or switching off the ability for remote participants to be visible on the platform, as necessary), while allowing the individual to continue to observe and attend the meeting if attending remotely; or
 - ii. remove the individual from the meeting if paragraph (a) does not address the disrupting behavior or is not available using the remote access service. In that circumstance, the meeting may continue following the removal of the disruptive individual.
 - iii. If the disruptive individual cannot be muted, have video suspended, or be removed from the meeting, as necessary to stop the disruption, the Presiding Officer may adjourn or recess the meeting. The purpose of any recess called due to a disruptive individual is to allow appropriate staff time to remove the disruptive individual or re-establish the meeting on the same platform without the disruptive individual. Under the Brown Act, no City business may be transacted during such recess. If the meeting is adjourned, such adjournment shall comply with the Brown Act procedures.
 - iv. Remove the individual from the meeting if the individual is participating in person and ignored the warning issued. Presiding Officer may adjourn or recess the meeting. The purpose of any recess called due to a disruptive individual is to allow appropriate staff time to remove the disruptive

individual. Under the Brown Act, no City business may be transacted during such recess. If the meeting is adjourned, such adjournment shall comply with the Brown Act procedures.

9. REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy may be amended by the City Council at a noticed public meeting in open session and may not be placed on the consent calendar.

APPROVED:

D. Scott McBride
City Manager