

CITY OF YUBA CITY
STAFF REPORT

Date: November 3, 2020
To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Diana Langley, Interim City Manager

Summary

Subject: Council Chambers – Public Meeting Access

Recommendation: Consider options and provide direction for public access to the Council Chambers during City Council meetings and various City Commission meetings

Fiscal Impact: None.

Purpose:

To provide options to maximize in-person public access to City Council and Commission meetings (i.e. Planning, Economic Development, Parks & Recreation, Senior, and Youth).

Background:

In March, the Governor declared a State of Emergency in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19. The Governor also issued Executive Order N-25-20 which directs Californians to follow public health directives including canceling large gatherings. The Executive Order allows local legislative bodies to hold meetings via conference calls while still meeting state transparency requirements.

Beginning mid-March, Council meetings and various Commission meetings were held virtually, with no public access to the Council Chambers. However, as conditions have improved locally, the Council meetings were opened to the public beginning with the September 1st Council meeting and some of the Commission meetings have been open to the public as well. In order to comply with social distancing protocols, seating is limited within the Council Chambers with overflow seating available in the Sutter Room in City Hall. In addition, the Council meetings have been live streamed so that the public can participate via that method as well.

At the October 20th Council meeting, Vice Mayor Boomgaarden requested that an item be agendaized to discuss increasing the ability for in-person public participation at the City Council meetings. Councilman Shaw also requested that the City's various Commissions be included in the discussion in regard to re-opening in-person attendance.

Analysis:

Options to increase the ability for in-person public participation at the meetings include:

1. Staff participate remotely from their offices to open additional chairs in the Council Chambers, and maintain the Sutter Room for overflow seating.
2. Staff participate remotely from the Sutter Room in City Hall to open additional chairs in the Council Chambers. This will eliminate overflow seating available in the Sutter Room.
3. Move the Council meetings to an alternate, larger location to allow for more seating that still complies with social distancing guidelines.
4. Do not follow social distancing guidelines and allow the Council Chambers to be filled to its maximum loading capacity. This option is being included, as it is an option, but not recommended. Current funding sources provided to assist with the response to COVID-19, such as CARES Act funds and CDBG-CV funds, may have provisions requiring that the City comply with all health orders as part of the acceptance of the funds. If Council is interested in this option, more research will be required to determine potential financial impacts, before it is implemented.
5. Provide more public awareness that in-person attendance at meetings is allowed.

In regard to the Commission meetings, the respective Directors in charge of those Commissions will start to schedule meetings in-person with provisions for the public to participate in-person as well.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Recommendation:

Consider options and provide direction for public access to the Council Chambers during City Council meetings and various City Commission meetings.

Prepared and Submitted by:

[/s/ Diana Langley](#)

Diana Langley
Interim City Manager

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

[SLC by email](#)