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Request to Adopt the proposed amendments to City Council Rules of Procedure Article X. Electronic Meetings to correspond to 2020 PA 254

Whereas, the Michigan Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261 et seq. was recently further amended by the enactment of Public Act 254 of 2020 to modify statutory provisions authorizing electronic meetings and remote attendance by members of a public body using telephonic or video conferencing means; and

Whereas, the City Council desires to continue to meet and conduct the public business of the City in a manner that permits both the general public and members of the City Council and other City boards and commissions subject to the Open Meetings Act to participate by electronic means, and the City Council further desires to amend the City Council Rules of Procedure to correspond to 2020 PA 254.

Therefore, It Is Resolved by the Rochester Hills City Council that Article X of the City Council Rules of Procedure is hereby amended, as follows:

Article X. Electronic Meetings

Section .01 Electronic meetings authorized

The City Council may meet and conduct its meetings, in whole or in part, by electronic means using telephone conferencing or video conferencing technology without regard to physical place and physical presence requirements, in accordance with Section 3a of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.263a, as amended, through March 31, 2021.

Beginning April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, City Council meetings may be held, in whole or in part, by electronic means using telephone conferencing or video conferencing technology due to circumstances requiring accommodation of any City Councilmember absent because of military duty, a medical condition, or when a statewide or local state of emergency or state of disaster is declared pursuant to law or charter or local ordinance by the governor or a local official, governing body, or chief administrative officer that would risk the personal health or safety of members of the public or the public body if the meeting were held in person. As used in these Rules, the term "medical condition" means an illness, injury, disability, or other health-related condition, including the quarantine or isolation of a City Councilmember to minimize the spread of a contagious disease.

Beginning January 1, 2022 members of the City Council may participate by electronic means in City Council meetings only to accommodate their absence due to military duty.

Section .02 Conduct of electronic meetings

An electronic meeting of the City Council will be conducted in a manner that permits two-way communication so that members of the Council can hear and be heard by one another, and so that public participants can hear members of the City Council and be heard by both the Council and other public participants. The City may use technology to facilitate typed public comments submitted by members of the public participating in the electronically-held meeting that shall be read to or shared with members of the City Council and other participants.

As permitted by the Open Meetings Act, a physical place is not required for an electronically-held meeting. Members of the City Council and members of the public participating electronically in a meeting that occurs in a physical place are considered present and in attendance at the meeting for all purposes. For a meeting at which City Councilmembers are physically absent due to military duty or a medical condition and who are being accommodated by remote participation, all other City Councilmembers must be physically present at the meeting to be able to participate.

In addition to any other notice required by the Open Meetings Act, advance notice of an electronically-held meeting shall be posted on a portion of the City's website that is fully accessible to the public. The public notice must be included on either the home page or a separate webpage dedicated to public notices for non-regularly scheduled or electronically-held public meetings that is accessible through a prominent and conspicuous link on the City's website home page that clearly describes its purpose for public notification of non-regularly scheduled or electronically-held public meetings. Any scheduled meeting of the City Council may be held as an electronic meeting as permitted by the Open Meetings Act if a notice consistent with this Article is posted at least 18 hours before the meeting begins. Any notice of the meeting of the City Council held electronically must clearly contain all of the following:

(a) Why the City Council is meeting electronically;

(b) How members of the public may participate in the meeting electronically (if a telephone number, internet address or both are required to participate, that information must be provided in the notice);

(c) How members of the public may contact members of the City Council to provide input or ask questions on any business that will come before the Council at the meeting; and

(d) How persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting.

If an agenda exists for an electronically held meeting of the City Council, the City shall, on a portion of its website that is fully accessible to the public make the agenda of the meeting available to the public at least 2 hours before the meeting begins. This publication of the meeting agenda does not prohibit subsequent amendment of the agenda at the meeting.

A member of the general public is not required to register or otherwise provide his or her name or other information or otherwise fulfill a condition precedent to attend an electronically-held meeting, other than mechanisms established and required by the City necessary to permit the individual to participate in a public comment period of the meeting.

Members of the general public otherwise participating in an electronically-held meeting of the City Council are excluded from participation in a closed session of the City Council that is held electronically provided that the closed session is convened and held in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act applicable to closed sessions.

Section .03 Agenda for regular business meetings; electronic meetings

The order of business for all meetings of the City Council conducted electronically and held during through March 31, 2021, and held beginning April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for City Council meetings held, in whole or in part, by electronic means using telephone conferencing or video conferencing technology when a declared statewide or local state of emergency or state of disaster exists shall be as set forth in Article V, Section .01 of the City Council Rules of Procedure. The order of business outlined in this paragraph is not applicable when electronic means is used to accommodate the absence of individual City Council members due to military duty or a medical condition.

Section .04 Public comments

During City Council meetings conducted electronically, members of the public attending the meeting, once recognized by the chair, shall identify themselves for the record and indicate the municipality where they reside. Comments by the public will be limited to three minutes for each speaker unless the time is extended by the chair or by vote of the Council.

Section .05 Councilmember attendance by phone/video

A member of the City Council who anticipates being absent from a meeting due to the circumstances set forth in the Open Meetings Act and this Article may request accommodation of their absence to permit their remote participation in and voting on Council business by two-way telephonic or video conferencing communication. A City Councilmember who desires to attend a meeting by telephonic or video conferencing shall inform the Clerk, or the Clerk's designee, at least 24 hours before the meeting to permit any necessary technology to be put in place to accommodate participation of the absent member. City Councilmembers attending a meeting by telephone or video conferencing may fully participate in the meeting, including voting and attendance in any closed session of the City Council. A Councilmember participating by telephonic or video conferencing is not permitted to chair the meeting unless all Councilmembers are participating by telephone or video conferencing.

Any member of the City Council attending a meeting remotely must publicly announce at the outset of the meeting (which shall be included in meeting minutes) that the member is attending the meeting remotely. If the member is attending the meeting remotely for a purpose other than for military duty, the member's announcement must identify the member's physical location by stating the city, village or township and the state from which the member is attending the meeting remotely.

Section .06. In-Person Meetings Before April 1, 2021

For a meeting of a public body held in person before April 1, 2021, the public body shall do both of the following:

(a) To the extent feasible under the circumstances, ensure adherence to social distancing and mitigation measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for purposes of preventing the spread of COVID-19, including the measure that an individual remain at least 6 feet from anyone from outside the individual's household.

(b) Adopt heightened standards of facility cleaning and disinfection to limit participant exposure to COVID-19, as well as protocols to clean and disinfect in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in the public body's meeting place.

Section .07 Other boards and commissions

All other City boards and commissions and the members thereof are governed by and shall conform to the provisions contained in this Article setting forth the requirements and procedures by which absent members and the public may remotely participate in meetings electronically by telephone or video conferencing. In the event of any conflict between these rules and the bylaws or procedural rules of the other board or commission, this Article is controlling authority.