

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

August 16, 2021

The City Council held a special work session at City Hall at 5:40 p.m. on August 16, 2021, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Rob Green, Frank Darrah, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Susan deBuhr, and Dave Sires. Staff members attended from all City Departments. Members of the community attended the meeting and teleconferenced in. Absent: Mark Miller.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, Protocols for Remote Public Participation in City Open Meetings.

Mayor Green opened Council discussion. Councilmember Kruse stated he is hoping to see guidelines from staff for discussion. Mayor Green stated guidelines required by Governor's previous proclamation have been dropped. City Attorney Rogers agreed; he stated Council is now meeting in person, and Council by resolution has continued the public electronic participation, which is not required by Iowa code; it's up to Council members to either continue or discontinue the option. Mayor Green asked what the Council would like to see moving forward. Councilmember Kruse and Mayor Green clarified that previously, only Council members, not public, could call-in. Councilmember Harding stated Council should allow the electronic option as long as the concern for COVID-19 exists to be accommodating to the public but to discontinue when possible. Councilmember Dunn agreed; she stated in-person presence is important but no one should have to put their health at risk to attend. Mayor Green clarified that pre-COVID-19, the only options were in-person attendance or sending in a letter; Councilmember Dunn would like to return to that post-pandemic. Councilmember deBuhr asked if the Governor had made any recommendations; City Attorney Rogers responded that the electronic guidelines of the previous proclamation had been allowed to lapse for Council attendance but that electronic public presence is at Council's discretion. Councilmember deBuhr asked what additional work is required of City staff to continue the electronic option; she stated the option needs a deadline, not to be open-ended. City Administrator Gaines stated an additional staff is at the meeting(s) and several IT people work on it throughout the day to make sure electronic option works; there is also coordination required between Channel 15 and IT. Mayor Green stated his understanding that Council does not wish to continue electronic option post-pandemic. Councilmember deBuhr stated it's easier to understand verbal and non-verbal communication in person; she asked to create a timeline and to not leave the option open-ended. Mayor Green offered two options: create a timeline and revisit or tie to an outside metric such as the County elevation status. Councilmember Kruse agreed to a metric; he questioned if it makes a difference in the effort of staff for Council electronic participation versus public participation. Information Systems Manager Sorenson stated that if a Councilmember participated by Zoom, it would still require staff at the meeting. Councilmember Harding stated that if Council is allowed to Zoom in, the public should have the same option. Mayor Green stated that currently the County elevation is "High"; does Council want to use the County status? Councilmember Kruse

stated Council should always have the option to call or Zoom in and the public option should be based on the status. Councilmember Harding asked if a Councilmember was already utilizing Zoom for a meeting, is it extra work for the public option also; Councilmember deBuhr responded that the public wouldn't know a Councilmember was on Zoom but they would have access to elevation status to know. Councilmember Dunn asked what staff time was required for call in; Information Systems Manager Sorenson responded staff set up a conference bridge facilitated by the City Clerk at the meeting; Mayor Green stated that worked for Councilmembers but wouldn't for the public, and Zoom offers the "raise hand" option. Councilmember Dunn stated the public need to attend in person post-pandemic; having extra staff at meeting(s) is not a good use of resources; Councilmember Harding agreed. Mayor Green stated he saw consensus to utilizing the Black Hawk County COVID-19 Elevation Status; he asked Council at what level. After further discussion it was determined to always allow electronic participation at "High" (red) and to not offer it for "Moderate" or "Elevated" (orange or yellow); it can be reconsidered if needed. City Attorney Rogers stated the previous Resolution #22,201 addressed other entities utilizing City facilities follow the same protocol; does Council agree or have concerns; Council will keep that standard.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant