

COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

Policy No. 35
General Subject: General
Specific Subject: Participation at Meetings of Standing Committees, Committee of the Whole, and City Council via Electronic Means
Date Approved: December 18, 2000
Date Revised: March 15, 2004; October 17, 2016

PURPOSE

The purpose is to establish a policy for the participation of elected officials at meetings of the standing committees, committee of the whole, and the City Council by electronic means.

RATIONALE

This policy allows the City's elected officials to participate in meetings of the standing committees, committee of the whole, and City Council when that elected official cannot physically attend the meeting. For example, if an alderman is away on a business trip or if an alderman is confined to bed due to an injury. The ability to attend a meeting electronically, such as by speakerphone, allows an alderman to participate in the discussion of the meeting.

POLICY STATEMENT

Public Notice

Notices of meetings to be conducted in which an elected official participates by electronic means shall be given in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Agenda for Meeting

If the elected official has given notice to the City Clerk not less than 48 hours before the meeting, of his/her participation by electronic means as required by this policy, then the fact of the electronic participation shall be disclosed in the agenda.

Minutes of Meeting

The minutes of the meeting shall reflect whether an elected official participated in the meeting by electronic means.

Limitations on the Conduct of Meetings via Electronic Means

The following rules shall apply for the conduct of any meeting at which any elected official is not physically present:

1. Except where it is not practicable, an elected official who cannot be physically present at a meeting of a standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council for one of the

reasons described below who wishes to attend by the use of electronic means, shall give notice to the Mayor or committee chair, as the case may be, and to the City Clerk not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.

2. Public notice of special or regular standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council meeting, when it is known forty-eight (48) hours in advance of such meeting that any elected official will attend by electronic means, shall contain, in addition to any other information required by law, the names of the elected officials who will participate in that manner, and the type of medium through which the elected official will participate.
3. If it is not practicable for an elected official to give forty-eight (48) hours notice that he/she will not be physically present at a special or regular standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council meeting for one of the reasons described below, and the elected official wishes to participate in the meeting by electronic means, on the date of the meeting, prior to convening the meeting, the Mayor, committee chair, or presiding chair, as the case may be, shall announce the elected official's method of participation and indicate the qualifying reason for electronic participation for the record.
4. The Mayor, committee chair, or presiding chair, as the case may be, shall announce the location of the speakerphone at the start of the meeting.
5. If the Mayor, committee chair, or presiding chair, as the case may be, participates in the meeting by electronic means, he/she shall vacate the chair and a presiding chair as elected by the members who are physically present, shall preside.
6. Elected officials qualify to participate in a meeting by electronic means if the committee chair determines that physical attendance at the meeting is prevented by:
 - a. personal illness or injury;
 - b. absence from the City for personal employment purposes;
 - c. absence from the City for City business; or
 - d. family or other emergency.
7. When one or more elected official participates in a standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council meeting by electronic means, all votes shall be by roll call.
8. A quorum must be physically present for any standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council meeting.
9. When a speakerphone is used to allow an elected official to participate in a standing committee, committee of the whole, or City Council meeting without being physically present, the elected official not physically at the meeting must, each time he/she wishes to speak, identify himself/herself by name and be recognized by the Mayor, committee chair, or presiding chair, as the case may be, before speaking.

10. An elected official participating in a meeting by electronic means shall be considered present at a meeting, as long as the elected official's voice can be heard by the public and transcribed for the record.
11. An elected official is permitted to participate by electronic means in standing committee meetings, committee of the whole meetings, City Council meetings, and City Council Workshops.
12. Any elected official is not permitted to participate by electronic means in any closed or executive session of any meeting.
13. An elected official is permitted to vote when participating by electronic means.