

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION POLICY DURING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

I. Purpose.

The purpose of this Policy is to specify the circumstances under which a member of the City Council may participate in regular and special meetings by telephone or other electronic means of participation, such as video-conferencing ("Electronic Participation"). Electronic Participation has inherent limitations because Electronic Participation effectively precludes a member of the City Council from contemporaneously observing documentary information presented during meetings; from fully evaluating a speaker's non-verbal language in assessing veracity or credibility; and from observing non-verbal explanations (*e.g.*, pointing at graphs and charts) during a speaker's presentation or testimony. The City Council finds that these limitations, inherent in Electronic Participation, may produce inefficiencies in meetings, increase the expense of meetings, and may undermine the decision-making process.

II. Statement of General Policy.

A member of the City Council may participate in a meeting of the City Council by electronic means only in accordance with this Policy.

A. *Non-Emergency Situations.*

Electronic Participation in non-emergency situations shall be made available and shall be limited as follows:

1. A member of the City Council may listen by telephone or other electronic means to any Council meeting. Such Council member listening via telephone shall be deemed present for purposes of determining a quorum, but only for meetings during which no quasi-judicial matters will be heard or considered. The member of City Council may not participate nor vote in a quasi-judicial public hearing; however, the Council member may maintain the electronic connection and monitor and listen to the hearing. The member of City Council may participate and vote in legislative matters.

2. Listening telephonically or by electronic means is intended to be an infrequent or occasional substitution for physical attendance. The City Council may, by majority vote of a quorum present, declare a Council member's repeated use of Electronic Participation excessive and deny a Council member's privilege to use Electronic Participation for a specific meeting or meetings.

3. Electronic Participation may also be made available to a City Council member during an executive session.

4. The City Council may discontinue the use of Electronic Participation by one or more members during a meeting where the participation results in delays or interference in the meeting process; *e.g.*, where the telephone connection or connection by other electronic means is repeatedly lost, the quality of the connection is unduly noisy or otherwise problematic to the conduct of the meeting, or the listening member is unable to hear speakers using a normal speaking voice amplified to a level suitable for the meeting audience in attendance.

B. *Emergency Situations*

In the event a quorum is unable to meet at the day, hour, and place fixed by the rules and procedures of the City Council because meeting in-person is not practical or prudent due to a health pandemic or emergency affecting the City, meetings may be conducted by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication so as to provide maximum practical notice. Meetings may be held by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The City Manager or the Mayor determines that meeting in person is not practical or prudent, because of a health pandemic or declaration of emergency affecting the City;
2. All members of the City Council can hear one another or otherwise communicate with one another and can hear or read all discussion and testimony in a manner designed to provide maximum notice and participation;
3. Members of the public present at the regular meeting location can hear or read all discussion, testimony and votes, unless not feasible due to the pandemic or emergency;
4. At least one member of the City Council is present at the regular meeting location, unless not feasible due to the pandemic or emergency declaration;
5. All votes are conducted by roll call;
6. Minutes of the meeting are taken and promptly recorded, and such records are open to public inspection; and
7. To the extent possible, full and timely notice is given to the public setting forth the time of the meeting, the fact that some members of the City Council may participate by telephone, and the right of the public to monitor the meeting from another location.

III. *Arranging for Electronic Participation.*

- A. To arrange to participate via Electronic Participation, a Council member shall:
 1. Contact the Mayor, City Manager, or City Clerk in advance of the meeting to determine if an arrangement for such participation via telephone conference or video conference is possible. Council members shall endeavor to advise the City of their intent to participate via Electronic Participation at the earliest possible time and not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the requested participation.
 2. The City shall initiate the Electronic Participation not more than ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled time of the meeting. Upon disconnection during a meeting, the City Clerk shall make one attempt to re-initiate the connection.

IV. Effect of Electronic Participation.

Telephonic participation shall only constitute actual attendance for purposes of establishing a quorum for meetings during which no quasi-judicial matters will be heard or considered.

V. Limited Applicability of Policy.

This Policy shall only apply to regular and special meetings (including study sessions) of the City Council of the City of Northglenn.

VI. Reasonable Accommodations.

The City shall provide reasonable accommodation and shall waive or modify provisions of this Policy to provide handicapped members of the City Council full and equal access to City Council meetings.