

## Information Item

**Date:** March 22, 2022

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Angela I. Carmon, City Attorney

**Subject:**

Information on Ordinance Amending Chapter 2 of City Code Entitled “Administration”  
Regarding Remote Participation In Meetings

**Strategic Focus Area:** Service Excellence

**Strategic Objective:** No

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** No

**Key Work Item:** No



The current remote participation ordinance allows the City Council, as a body, to participate remotely/virtually in committee and council meetings during the State of Emergency (“SOE”). At other times, individual council members may participate remotely/virtually for very limited reasons (personal illness or disability that does not impact the member’s ability to participate in the meeting, family, or other personal emergency) provided a majority of City Council or committee members are participating in person. The revised draft ordinance extends the bases for a council member to participate remotely to “other scheduling conflicts that make in-person attendance impracticable”.

Additionally, volunteer boards and commissions experienced an increase in membership participation during COVID-19. Many of the volunteer boards and commissions would like to continue to meet remotely. While the authority for such volunteer boards and commissions to meet remotely is not as certain as desired, the actions of such boards, with a few exceptions, are advisory and nonbinding. The revised ordinance amendment allows the city designated boards and commissions to continue to meet remotely, upon a majority vote of the membership provided, the public is afforded access to the meeting in the same manner as that previously afforded under G.S. 166A-19.24, and all notice procedures set forth in G.S. 143-318.12 are adhered to. However, no hearings before the Citizen Police Review Board and quasi-judicial proceedings before the Winston-Salem Zoning Board of Adjustment shall be conducted remotely, unless all persons who have standing to participate in the hearing have been given notice of the hearing and consent to the remote meeting. This provision shall not apply to Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission, the City/County Planning Board, or any board, authority, or commission whose membership is not appointed solely by the City.

If acceptable, this item will be brought back to the Community Development/Housing/General Government committee in April for recommended action.