

**AGENDA  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL\*  
JULY 9, 2020**

**\*THIS WILL BE AN ELECTRONIC MEETING. IF YOU WISH TO PROVIDE INPUT ON ANY ITEM, YOU MAY DO SO AS A VIDEO PARTICIPANT BY GOING TO:**

<https://zoom.us/j/826593023>

**OR BY TELEPHONE BY DIALING: US:1-312-626-6799 or toll-free: 1-888-475-4499**

Zoom Meeting ID: 826 593 023

**CALL TO ORDER:** 12:00 Noon

1. Motion directing staff regarding virtual or in-person City Council and Board/Commission meetings

**DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Please note that this Agenda may be changed up to 24 hours before the meeting time as provided by Section 21.4(2), *Code of Iowa*.**

## Staff Report

### **COUNCIL MEETINGS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN PERSON**

July 9, 2020

#### **BACKGROUND:**

At the May 12 City Council meeting, the Council directed staff to maintain the closure of City facilities through July 1. On July 1, City Hall and other facilities re-opened to the public with precautionary measures in place against COVID-19. City staff has prepared for a return to in-person City Council meetings beginning with the regular Council meeting on July 14.

For the past several months, Council meetings and many board and commission meetings have been held via Zoom, which allows participation from the public online or over the phone. Staff has spent the past several weeks working through technical issues in an attempt to allow Zoom participation among Council Members and the public during a live Council meeting. Due to the manner in which Zoom interacts with the audio and video systems in the Council Chambers, a feedback loop is generated when Zoom operates in the Council Chambers. **Therefore, it is not possible to have combined Zoom participation and in-person participation of Council Members and/or the public.**

Staff is aware that several upcoming Council Meetings have items that may be of increased interest to the public, therefore generating more participation. These include workshops regarding Ames Plan 2040, the 321 State discussion, and reports regarding policing.

Measures have been taken to provide for increased protections in the Council Chambers, including:

- Plexiglas screens have been suspended from the ceiling in between each seat at the dais
- Audience chairs have been separated six feet apart and extra chairs have been removed from the room. This leaves enough seating for approximately 16 in the main portion of the Council Chambers (excluding seating at the presentation table, clerk desk, and dais). Staff expects to have the wall to the Courtroom open regularly, which brings the total number of possible audience seats to at least 24
- City staff will remain in their offices or the City Manager's Conference Room until the time comes for them to present or answer questions during the meeting. This frees up more room in the Chambers for the public.
- Overflow public seating will be established in Conference Rooms 235 and 135, which can each accommodate another 10 socially distanced persons

- In the event the overflow seating is not enough, the meeting may be relocated to the Auditorium or audience participants can be spaced apart in the hallway
- Orange cards with speaker information will be placed in a tray on the podium instead of being handed to the Clerk or a Council Member

Staff is also working with each individual City Board and Commission to arrange a transition to in-person meetings throughout the month of July.

**OPTIONS:**

- 1. Direct staff to proceed with plans to hold City Council meetings in-person, beginning with the City Council meeting on July 14.**

If this option is selected, the City Council should also provide direction regarding whether it is the Council's expectation that Boards and Commissions also hold their meetings in-person.

- 2. Direct staff to continue holding City Council meetings virtually on Zoom, until the City Council provides further direction to resume in-person meetings.**

If this option is selected, the City Council should provide direction regarding whether Boards and Commissions will be permitted to continue holding their meetings via Zoom.