


REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: May 17, 2021
Item No.: 7.e

Department Approval

City Manager Approval



Item Description: Discuss City Reopening Plan

BACKGROUND

Due to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, Roseville City Hall and other city facilities were closed to the public on March 16, 2020. Due to the pandemic and declared emergency, the City Council held a hybrid meeting (combination of electronic and in-person participants) on March 23, 2020. Beginning on April 13, 2020, City Council has been meeting virtually due to the ongoing pandemic. City Commissions also began meeting totally virtual since April 2020.

Over the past year, City programs and services have been modified to adhere to state government and public health guidance. The latest guidance in Minnesota was released last week by Governor Walz and provided some dates and milestones for the loosening and removal of restrictions the state are currently under. These changes include:

Starting May 7, 2021

- No capacity limits or distancing requirements for outdoor events
- No mask requirement for outdoor venues of fewer than 500 people
- Increased indoor business occupancy for large venues
- No occupancy limits for outdoor seating for restaurants
- No mandatory closing time for restaurants
- No gathering limit for social gatherings outside
- Indoor gathering limit increased to 50

Starting May 28, 2021

- Remaining capacity and distancing restrictions end
- Masking is still required indoors and large outdoor events

July 1, 2021 or sooner

- Statewide masking requirement will end when 70% of Minnesotans ages 16 and older are vaccinated or by July 1, whichever occurs first

City Hall Reopening

The City leadership team has been working on the reopening plan for the past several months in anticipation of loosening restrictions. As staff reviewed the timing of the plan, we kept the following things in mind:

- The distribution of vaccines to city employees
- The status of school learning models (in-person, hybrid, distance learning)

- The status of COVID-19 spread including variants
- The status of State government and public health restrictions

Prior to the most recent announcement by Governor Walz last week, staff had targeted mid-June as a potential return to the office for the City Hall and re-opening City Hall to the public. In reviewing the latest loosening of restrictions and factoring in the considerations mentioned above, the City Manager has communicated to staff the following:

- Week of June 14- 18, 2021 – City staff return to work at City Hall offices in preparation of City Hall being open to the public starting Monday, June 21. Each Department will work with employees to ensure individual work stations are set up properly for the return to work and plan for sufficient staffing to be in place to interact with the public once City Hall is open.
- June 21, 2021 – City Hall will be open to the public. As mentioned previously, each Department will ensure that sufficient staffing is in place to interact with the public conducting City business.
- June 21 – September 12, 2021 – City Hall staff are encouraged and expected to work from the office and/or split time at City Hall offices and working from home. This transition period allows additional flexibility for employees to still work from home if the situation warrants it.
- September 13, 2021 – Staff are expected to work from City Hall offices unless an agreed upon arrangement is approved by the Department Head and City Manager consistent with our post-COVID Telework/Remote work policy under development.

City Council/Commission Meetings

Given the guidance from the Governor, the City Council should discuss when meetings will need to return in-person. One thing to keep in mind is that City Council and Commissions are able to meet virtually due to the ongoing public health emergency. Without an emergency declaration, public meetings must be conducted in person. The current statewide emergency declaration is in effect until May 14, 2021. It has been reported that the Governor will extend the order for another 30 days to expire on June 13, 2021. Beyond that, it is unknown what the Governor will do, but it is very possible that the public health emergency will not be extended beyond June.

Under a new state law, there is a limited ability for an individual elected official to participate in a public meeting virtually due to medical reasons after July 1 from their home but it is capped at 3 times in 2021 and only for a 60-day period after a state of emergency is rescinded. Therefore, once there no longer is a state emergency declaration in place, the City Council and City Commissions as a body will need to plan to meet in person.

Given the existing and projected emergency declarations, the City Council may need to convene in person as soon as the June 21st meeting. The City Commissions will also have to follow the same schedule as the City Council.

Regardless of the timing of returning to in-person City Council and Commission meetings, there has been a desire to still allow members of the public to participate virtually in City Council and Commission meetings. Staff believes this is possible and has been working with NineNorth to ensure this can occur. Virtual participation will require some logistics and coordination at the actual meeting, but staff is confident this can be accommodated.

84 **Local Mask Mandate**

85 The City Council passed a local mask mandate on July 20, 2020. The local mask mandate was in effect
86 until one of several things occurred, including a statewide masking order. On July 25 2020, Governor
87 Walz implemented a statewide mask mandate. Therefore, with the implementation of the statewide
88 masking requirement, our local masking requirement ended and there is no further action we must take.

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90 **Local Peacetime Emergency**

91 On March 16, 2020, Mayor Roe declared a local peacetime emergency due to the COVID pandemic. On
92 March 16, 2020, the City Council extended the local emergency until May 15, 2020. On May 11, 2020,
93 the City Council extended the local emergency until such time the state peacetime emergency ended and
94 the City Council adopts a resolution rescinding the local emergency. It is not known when the state
95 peacetime emergency will end, but staff will bring forward a resolution rescinding the local emergency
96 once an end date for the state peacetime emergency is known.

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98 **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

99 Ensuring access to local government is essential to transparency and accountability of decision making.
100 Under emergency declarations, special accommodations need to be made for the good of the public. Once
101 the emergency declaration is no longer in place, it is imperative that access to the local government
102 decision making process is provided without any barriers.

103 **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

104 No new direct costs will be incurred in opening City Hall and returning to in-person public meetings.
105 However, expenditures to ensure the safety of everyone have been made in anticipation of returning to
106 pre-emergency operations. These costs were covered by federal CARES funds.

107 **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

108 Staff recommends the City Council receive the information contained in this report and provide direction
109 as necessary regarding the reopening plan.

110 **REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION**

111 The City Council should receive the information contained in this report and provide direction as
112 necessary regarding the reopening plan.

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Attachments: None