



CITY OF WAUKESHA

Administration

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Committee: Common Council	Date: 8/14/2020
Common Council Item Number: Click here to enter text.	Date: 8/18/2020
Submitted By: Chris Pofahl	City Administrator Approval: Click here to enter text.
Finance Department Review: Click here to enter text.	City Attorney's Office Review: Click here to enter text.
Subject: Referral to Discuss and Approve a new location for in-person public meetings	

Details:

I would like to begin by letting the Council know that I do understand how difficult of change it is to do virtual meetings, and all the challenges that come with it. We all face and overcome the challenges of this pandemic every day both professionally and personally. As I understand the referral, the goal would be to find a larger place to meet so that the Council members would be able to spread out to maintain a safe distance from each other. As everyone knows, I am the IT Director, so it is my job to figure how to get the technical part of our legislative meetings to work. I also am the Logistics Section Chief within the City's Emergency Operations Center, so I am also responsible for making sure the proper engineering controls are in place, so that everyone can stay as healthy and as safe as possible. I will respond to the referral and sharing my perspective from both roles.

Logistics of In-Person Meetings:

As the Council is aware, I lead a team that planned and executed the April elections, which was very early on in the pandemic. As the City continued, and continues, to operate, it is my team that is responsible for making sure we have everything we need to do so safely. My team finds the hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, surgical masks, N95 masks, electro statistic sprayers, and all the plexiglass shields the departments have setup at their counters. The point I am trying to make here is that my team and I have a pretty good understanding of what it will take execute in-person meetings safely. The guidelines that I lay out here would need to be adhered to no matter the location.

1. You need to control what you can control, and the first thing would be the amount of people in the meeting. We have 15 Alderman, the Mayor, the City Administrator, the City Attorney, the DPW Director, the City Clerk, the City Planner, and 1-2 IT staff members that would be present. Additionally, there are staff members that would be presenting, and staff members that attend Council meetings on a regular basis, so we would be starting with about 25 people in the room (I will address the hybrid option later) If the Council started to meet in person, public attendance should remain virtual. We have provided many avenues for those who want to speak to be able to do so.
2. Creating a socially distant dais would not improve the virtual challenges the council is having, just bring new ones. If we only account for elected officials at the dais, it would be 102' long. Putting the dais in a semi-circle would put some members 40'-50' apart, which would be challenging under good conditions, but if were to move to the gymnasium at Scheutze, the acoustics simply would not work. In-person should remain at the WPRF



offices on Aviation Dr. The temporary dais would remain the same as it was pre-Covid. We would put plexiglass shields between each person at the dais. The materials for the shields cost about \$15 per shield plus staff time to make them.

3. Executive Order #82 requires the use of face coverings, and even without this executive order, there are some people that prefer to wear one. There are communication challenges that face coverings present, the biggest is the muffling they do making it sometimes hard to hear someone clearly.
4. Other logistical challenges are the room setup, tear down, and sanitization of the room for every meeting.

Technical Challenges of In-Person Meetings:

The technical challenges remain mostly the same as they always have, and that is to get the highest quality broadcast of the meeting as possible. It is important to keep in mind that the audio/video of our meetings are the detailed record of the legislative action taken. The minutes only show the action taken, to know how the legislative body came to that decision, to see and hear the discussion that lead to that decision is found in the AV. Since the discussion of doing in-person meetings started again, my position is to do it all virtual, or all in-person. The hybrid model simply does not make for a good production. You either have a good shot of the Zoom participants with the in-person attendees in a small window, or a good shot of the in-person attendees with a TV in the background with the Zoom participants. If our constituents are trying to see who is talking, it is difficult. In order to address this problem we actually have the in-person attendees join the Zoom meeting. I've attached a screenshot of the first hybrid we did as example. In the top left corner are you able to identify which person is Mayor Reilly, and who the other person is? Imagine how difficult it is for constituent who doesn't see you on a regular basis.

Enough about the problems, let's talk solutions. A few meetings ago, Alderman Corey Payne brought up the question as to why the Katherine Muehl room, which serves as a backup to the Council Chambers has not been wired with AV as such. This should help answer that question as well.

The Katherine Muehl room is a multifunction room like many of our rooms, so we don't have the luxury of having the dais setup in the exact same location every time, nor having microphone jacks at each location an alderman sits. We researched a wireless mic system for the room, and best and most cost-effective solution was \$32,000. Like most of you, there will be people who read this and think that there must be a less expensive system. There are, but then they require us to be other equipment like larger audio mixers, that we simply can't reuse anywhere else and are large and bulky and cannot be moved in and out of the room easily, so storage of the equipment becomes a problem too. We have tried to use boundary mics, but they are not meant to be used they way we are, so some of the audio quality is poor. Having plexiglass shields setup will require a mic for each person.

The same challenges hold true for the cameras in the KM room. Council meetings require more cameras for the high-quality production we are looking for because of the number of people at the dais. Like the audio, having a place to keep, or store the equipment that controls the cameras is a space issue as well. The cost for cameras is roughly \$24,000. There are also installation costs associated with the cameras because the cables need to be run, and cameras mounted.

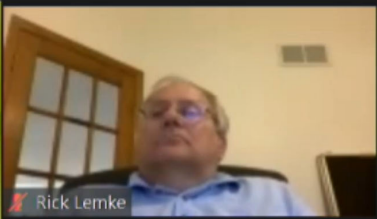
My recommendation to the Council is meet virtually. I believe it will provide the highest quality broadcast and is the most cost effective. We have had 10 virtual meetings since the start of the pandemic. There are 10 more Council meetings before we move into the new City Hall.

I will be at the Council meeting on Tuesday to discuss this. If you have any question before then, please email me.

Respectfully,
Chris Pofahl



Shawn N. Reilly



Rick Lemke



Kathleen Cummings



Elizabeth Moltzan



Don Paul Browne



Dean Lemke



Joe Pieper



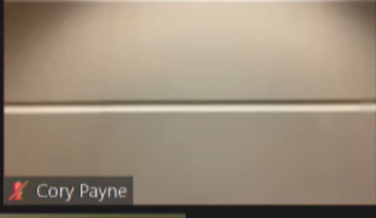
Peter Bartels



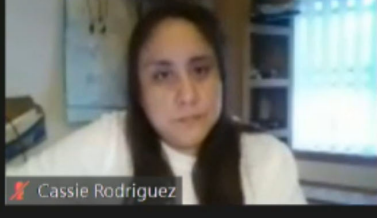
Eric Payne



Leonard Miller



Cory Payne



Cassie Rodriguez



Daniel Manion

