



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0024, **Version:** 1

Resolution in Support of Virtual Meetings under the OMA and SB-0705 and SB-0792
Whereas, The provision for virtual meetings under the Open Meetings Act (OMA) expired on December 31, 2021;

Whereas, The COVID-19 rate as of December 31, 2021, was at an all-time high and is continuing to rise with the spread of the much more contagious Omicron variant;

Whereas, State Senator Jeff Irwin introduced SB-0705 to extend virtual meetings under the OMA through March 31, 2022. Similar bills were introduced in the House and Senate, including SB-0792. However, these bills did not move to committee in the Republican-controlled House and Senate, thus effective January 1, 2022, local bodies must meet in person at significant risk to public safety;

Whereas, Constituents have raised concerns that while they are vaccinated and boosted, in some cases they are in households and work environments with infants who are not able to be vaccinated, further increasing the risk to the public;

Whereas, Constituents have raised concerns that persons with underlying conditions are more likely to suffer serious complications if they contract COVID-19;

Whereas, Constituents have raised concerns that persons of different ages and ethnicities have different risks of hospitalization and death from COVID-19;

Whereas, Historically, large numbers of people attend local meetings. These high numbers make it challenging, if not impossible, to provide a safe environment, especially maintaining a 6 ft distance; and

Whereas, Local governments, including Ann Arbor, have demonstrated that technology allows for virtual meetings with effective deliberation, transparent decision making and, in some cases, more convenient public engagement, especially for persons protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator advocate with members of the Michigan Legislature and the Governor to enact a law to allow virtual meetings under the OMA through March 31, 2022 or later;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator solicit the support of the Michigan Municipal League, the City's lobbyist (Governmental Consultant Services, Inc (GCSI)), the Chamber of Commerce, and any other local groups and leaders who may have influence in Lansing; and

RESOLVED, That Council agrees to support the City Administrator and advocate for SB-0705, SB-0792, and any companion House bills.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Griswold and Radina