

Ordinance No. 2021 - 06

**AN UNCODIFIED EMERGENCY ORDINANCE
REGARDING ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATIONS IN MEETINGS OF CITY PUBLIC BODIES**

Recitals

A. Staunton City Council has adopted a series of ordinances to ensure the continuity of government related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including: Ordinance 2020-04; Ordinance 2020-24; and Ordinance 2021-04;

B. At its January 14, 2021 regular meeting, City Council engaged in a discussion about possibly requiring public body member use of any available video feature in any meeting held using an electronic communications platform as well as about the possible remote attendance of City Council members who desire to observe meetings of City Council's committees both in open and closed meetings;

C. City Council believes that it is consistent with transparency and accountability in the use of electronic communications for meetings of City Council, to include additional conditions that relate to a Council member's utilization of available video features of any electronic communications platform, especially during a closed meeting so that there is added assurance no other person is remotely accessing the closed meeting;

D. City Council also believes it is consistent with transparency and accountability to allow a Council member who is not a member of a committee of Council, to observe such committee meetings, including closed meetings of any such committee;

E. This matter has been properly heard and considered; and

F. These recitals are deemed an integral part of this ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Staunton, Virginia (Council), to the fullest extent permitted by law under these circumstances, that:

1. As an additional condition of City Council's use of any electronic communications platform that includes available video features, all members of Council, during City Council meetings, shall at all times activate and keep activated the available video feature of any electronic communications platform, such as Zoom, so that the Council member is seen at all times during Council's meetings except during recesses of Council and brief, intermittent periods due to unanticipated technical difficulties or unexpected other circumstances; and if such conditions are not honored by a Council member, the presiding officer shall caution the member twice during any meeting and,

absent compliance in yet a third instance of non-compliance, shall direct that the meeting continue without the presence of the non-compliant member; and

2. Council members who are not members of a committee of Council may observe such committee's meetings, including closed meetings, using an electronic communications platform, and such committee will facilitate such observation by a Council member using an electronic communications platform, with support to the extent necessary from City staff and the Clerk of Council; and

3. The Clerk of Council is **DIRECTED** to provide a copy of this ordinance to each member of City Council and have posted a copy of this ordinance at the usual public places and on the City's website and to provide a copy to the Chair of each City public body, including but not limited to the School Board, the Economic Development Authority, the Planning Commission, and the Historic Preservation Commission.

Adopted: February 11, 2021

Effective Date: February 11, 2021

Expiration Date: April 9, 2021



Andrea W. Oakes, Mayor

ATTEST: Suzanne F. Simmons
Suzanne F. Simmons, Clerk of Council