



Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council

CONSIDERATION OF REVERTING GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS TO THREE MINUTES PER SPEAKER AND INCLUDING REMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

(City Clerk Myra Maravilla)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends City Council discuss:

1. Time limits set for the general public comment period; and
2. Expanding the general public comment option to allow for virtual participation.

Executive Summary:

At its regular May 27, 2025, City Council meeting, Councilmember Keegan, with the support of Councilmember Francois and Mayor Saemann, requested a future agenda item to revert the general public comment period to three minutes per speaker and allow for virtual participation.

Background:

At its February 15, 2024 meeting, the City Council adopted Resolution No. RES-24-7414, establishing rules for the conduct of City Council meetings and subsidiary boards and commissions.

Time Limits

Resolution No. RES-24-7414 restricts the general public comment period to two minutes per speaker for a total of thirty minutes. It adds a second general public comment period for speakers unable to provide general public comment during the first opportunity because the thirty-minute time limit is exhausted. The time limit exists to ensure that business items are heard in a timely manner. The Presiding Officer has the discretion to extend individual time limits and forgo the set thirty-minute total time limit as deemed appropriate. This has been the past practice of the Presiding Officer.

Prior to Resolution No. RES-24-7414, general public comment allowed three minutes per speaker with no total time limit. However, on September 26, 2023, the City Council was the target of a coordinated attack where multiple members of the public flooded the City's Zoom meeting requesting to comment. These commenters proceeded to make hateful, bigoted, antisemitic, and sexist remarks intended to disrupt the meeting. These comments

were not related to City business in any way and instead were vile attempts to stoke a reaction from City officials and disrupt the City Council’s public meeting.

Remote Participation

At its August 10, 2021 meeting, the City Council transitioned to a hybrid in-person and virtual format for its meetings and subsidiary boards and commissions after it proclaimed a state of emergency under AB 361 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, the City Council has continued to hold hybrid meetings, although it is no longer required by law.

The Brown Act does not legally mandate that the public be allowed to participate remotely unless a member of the City Council attends the meeting virtually under the remote participation rules of AB 2449 or under the traditional teleconferencing options.

Council Actions

Meeting Date	Description
<u>August 10, 2021</u>	City Council authorized the continuation of a hybrid (in-person and virtual) format for meetings conducted by the City.
<u>December 12, 2023</u>	City Council approved changes to the agenda and meeting procedures to limit general public comments to two minutes per speaker for a total of thirty minutes for general public comment, along with other changes.
<u>February 15, 2024</u>	City Council approved Resolution No. RES-25-7414, effectuating the changes made at their December 12, 2023 meeting.
<u>May 27, 2025</u>	Councilmember Keegan requested a future agenda item to revert the general public comment period to three minutes per speaker and allow for virtual participation.

Discussion:

The City Council expressed interest in reverting to the three-minute time limit per speaker under general public comment at its May 27, 2025, meeting. Resolution No. RES-24-7414 provides parameters for general public comment for City Council and subsidiary boards and commissions.

Should the City Council revert to the three-minute time limit per speaker and allow virtual participation during the general public comment period, the changes would be immediately implemented across all subsidiary boards and commissions. A resolution would be brought back to the City Council to formally ratify the changes.

Fiscal Impact:

The annual subscription cost for providing a virtual participation option via the Zoom platform is approximately \$6,000.

Attachment:

Resolution No. RES-24-7414

Respectfully Submitted by: Myra Maravilla, City Clerk

Noted for Fiscal Impact: Brandon Walker, Administrative Services Director

Legal Review: Todd Leishman, Interim City Attorney

Approved: Steve Napolitano, Interim City Manager