

Health Commission
Resolution 21-15

RESOLUTION MAKING FINDINGS TO ALLOW TELECONFERENCED MEETINGS UNDER CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953(e)

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 54953(e) empowers local policy bodies to convene by teleconferencing technology during a proclaimed state of emergency under the State Emergency Services Act so long as certain conditions are met; and

WHEREAS, In March, 2020, the Governor of the State of California proclaimed a state of emergency in California in connection with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic, and that state of emergency remains in effect; and

WHEREAS, On February 25, 2020, the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco (the “City”) declared a local emergency, and on March 6, 2020 the City’s Health Officer declared a local health emergency, and both those declarations also remain in effect; and

WHEREAS, On March 11 and March 23, 2020, the Mayor issued emergency orders suspending select provisions of local law, including sections of the City Charter, that restrict teleconferencing by members of policy bodies; those orders remain in effect, so City law currently allows policy bodies to meet remotely if they comply with restrictions in State law regarding teleconference meetings; and

WHEREAS, On September 16, 2021, the Governor signed AB 361, a bill that amends the Brown Act to allow local policy bodies to continue to meet by teleconferencing during a state of emergency without complying with restrictions in State law that would otherwise apply, provided that the policy bodies make certain findings at least once every 30 days; and

WHEREAS, While federal, State, and local health officials emphasize the critical importance of vaccination and consistent mask-wearing to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the City’s Health Officer has issued at least one order (Health Officer Order No. C19-07y, available online at www.sfdph.org/healthorders) and one directive (Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i, available online at www.sfdph.org/directives) that continue to recommend measures to promote physical distancing and other social distancing measures, such as masking, in certain contexts; and

WHEREAS, The California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Occupational Safety and Health (“Cal/OSHA”) has promulgated Section 3205 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations, which requires most employers in California, including in the City, to train and instruct employees about measures that can decrease the spread of COVID-19, including physical distancing and other social distancing measures; and

WHEREAS, Without limiting any requirements under applicable federal, state, or local pandemic-related rules, orders, or directives, the City's Department of Public Health, in coordination with the City's Health Officer, has advised that for group gatherings indoors, such as meetings of boards and commissions, people can increase safety and greatly reduce risks to the health and safety of attendees from COVID-19 by maximizing ventilation, wearing well-fitting masks (as required by Health Officer Order No. C19-07), using physical distancing where the vaccination status of attendees is not known, and considering holding the meeting remotely if feasible, especially for long meetings, with any attendees with unknown vaccination status and where ventilation may not be optimal; and

WHEREAS, On July 31, 2020, the Mayor issued an emergency order that, with limited exceptions, prohibited policy bodies other than the Board of Supervisors and its committees from meeting in person under any circumstances, so as to ensure the safety of policy body members, City staff, and the public; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Health Commission has met remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic and can continue to do so in a manner that allows public participation and transparency while minimizing health risks to members, staff, and the public that would be present with in-person meetings while this emergency continues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That San Francisco Health Commission finds as follows:

1. As described above, the State of California and the City remain in a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this meeting, the San Francisco Health Commission has considered the circumstances of the state of emergency.
2. As described above, State and City officials continue to recommend measures to promote physical distancing and other social distancing measures, in some settings.
3. As described above, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, conducting meetings of this body and its committees, including the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Laguna Honda Hospital Joint Conference Committees, in person would present imminent risks to the safety of attendees, and the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of members to meet safely in person; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That for at least the next 30 days meetings of the San Francisco Health Commission and its committees, including the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Laguna Honda Hospital Joint Conference Committees, will continue to occur exclusively by teleconferencing technology (and not by any in-person meetings or any other meetings with public access to the places where any policy body member is present for the meeting). Such meetings of the San Francisco Health Commission that occur by teleconferencing technology will provide an opportunity for members of the public to address this body and its committees, including the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Laguna Honda Hospital Joint

Conference Committees, and will otherwise occur in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of parties and the members of the public attending the meeting via teleconferencing; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Executive Secretary of the San Francisco Health Commission is directed to place a resolution substantially similar to this resolution on the agenda of a future meeting of the San Francisco Health Commission within the next 30 days. If the San Francisco Health Commission does not meet within the next 30 days, the Executive Secretary is directed to place a such resolution on the agenda of the next meeting of San Francisco Health Commission.

I hereby certify that the San Francisco Health Commission at its December 7, 2021 meeting adopt the foregoing resolution.

A handwritten signature in blue ink is written over a horizontal black line. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Mark Morewitz'.

Mark Morewitz, MSW
Health Commission Executive Secretary