

# City of Gainesville

## City Clerk's Office

### Hybrid In-person/Virtual Public Meetings

The following guidance applies to in-person public meetings and virtual workshops conducted by the City of Gainesville during the Declared State of Emergency for the COVID-19 Pandemic as adopted by the City Commission on November 6, 2020 by [Resolution 200493](#).

#### Location & Quorum

To the extent possible, all **in-person public meetings** should be held in the **City Hall Auditorium**. A quorum of Commissioners or board members must be physically present. Members may participate virtually if they have “extraordinary circumstances” that necessitate their participation via virtual means. Each member must submit an affidavit to the board clerk/staff liaison seven (7) calendar days in advance of the meeting (for example, for a Thursday meeting, the affidavit must be filed with the board clerk by 5pm on the preceding Thursday).

Meetings will be open to the public, and virtual access will continue to be provided via broadcast, streaming and/or recording for archival access on the City's website. **Workshops** may be held virtually and do not require a quorum to be physically present where no formal actions (meaning no motions and votes) are taken.

**Public Access:** Temperature checks will be required and all participants (members, staff and neighbors) must wear masks/facial coverings at all times in City Hall. Security will administer safety protocols. Facilities will open the building to permit public access prior to meetings; and sanitize the meeting space. A limited number of neighbors will be permitted to enter the Auditorium, and overflow space will be available to accommodate additional participants while maintaining social distancing.

**Public Comment:** In person: One individual at a time will be permitted to give public comment in person in the Auditorium (wearing a mask). The lectern will be sanitized after each comment. Virtual: Neighbors may continue to call in to meetings via Zoom audio or a third-party phone line. They may also submit comments in writing or by phone before and during the meeting.

#### Scheduling

Scheduling of meetings in the City Hall Auditorium will be determined based on priority as determined by the Charter Officers and department leadership. In-person advisory board meetings should be scheduled as early as possible by submitting the following forms located on the [Clerk's Office SharePoint site](#). Boards may also hold virtual-only *workshops* if no action will be taken (ie, no motions or votes).

##### **Step 1: Reserve a meeting space**

- Submit the **Room Reservation form** to request the City Hall Auditorium for an in-person meeting. Note if the request is recurring (eg, monthly).
- For hybrid (in-person and virtual meetings) or workshops (virtual only), schedule an online meeting in Zoom or another platform).

##### **Step 2: Submit the meeting(s) to the public calendar**

- Review the [Public Meeting Calendar Guidelines](#).

- Complete the Public Meeting Calendar form to post the meeting to the City's website. The Clerk's Office will create a recurring meeting if appropriate.

### **Step 3: Confirm details for the weekly Notice of Meetings**

- Email final meeting details to Michael Bryant (bryantmj@cityofgainesville.org) by 2:00 pm on the Thursday before each meeting. Include Zoom links, public comment info, etc.
- Review the public meeting calendar on the City's website to check for accuracy.

## **Agenda Deadlines**

- **Regular Commission Meetings and Regular Committee Meetings:**
  - Agenda items and back-up due to the Clerk's Office by **noon seven calendar days prior to the meeting**. Example: For a Thursday meeting, the agenda items must be submitted to the Clerk by noon on the Thursday of the week before the Thursday meeting. The final agenda will be published by 5pm five calendar days prior to the meeting date.
  - **Emergency or time-sensitive items** may be submitted after the agenda is published. Additional back-up for existing items may be submitted by noon three business days prior to the. **Revisions** may be made at any time if necessary to correct errors or agenda incorrect information.
- **Special Meetings and Workshops:** Agenda items and back-up due to the Clerk's Office by **noon three (3) business days prior to the meeting**. The final agenda will be published by 5pm that day. Example: For a Wednesday Special Meeting, the agenda items are due by noon on the Friday before; and the Clerk will publish the agenda by 5pm on that Friday.
- **Advisory Boards & Commissions:** Agendas for must be **finalized one week prior to the meeting date**. Example: For a Thursday meeting, the agenda will be published by 5pm on the preceding Thursday.

## **Virtual Meeting Participants (City Commission Meetings)**

Staff and external guests may continue to participate virtually in public meetings. Please notify the Clerk's Office of expected virtual participants following the steps below.

- Each Charter Office's Agenda Coordinator submits the [Virtual Meeting Participant Form](#) by noon the day before the meeting.
  - City Manager's Office: For Regular City Commission Meetings, Zanni Lynch forwards the form to each department's Executive Assistant to submit.
  - JotForm will email an automatic confirmation to the person submitting the form. EA's in the City Manager's Office should forward the confirmation to Zanni.
- **Clerk's Office forwards the Outlook meeting invitation** with Zoom access details to the Charter Offices.
  - **Agenda Coordinators forward the Outlook invitation** to staff and external guests. Zanni Lynch forwards the Outlook invitation to the Executive Assistants for each department/division to forward to their respective participants.
  - **Send a follow-up confirmation email** with virtual meeting reminders. For staff or guests who are unfamiliar with Zoom meetings, attach the *Best Practices for Virtual Meetings* (PDF).
  - **Contact the Clerk's Office** for assistance with presentations or technical Zoom issues.

## **Advisory Board & Committee Meetings**

Please note the following considerations for Advisory Boards and Committees holding in-person or “hybrid” meetings. Workshops may be held entirely virtually if no business action will be taken.

**Room Reservations & Meeting Calendar:** Confirm the Auditorium room reservation for the meeting and submit the meeting details to the Public Meeting Calendar/Notice of Meetings form.

**Facilities Support:** The Clerk's Office shares the meeting calendar with Facilities to arrange for room set-up and sanitization. Facilities should assist with unlocking/locking the meeting room, turning on lights, etc., but it is recommended that staff confirm specific arrangements with Facilities in advance.

**Safety/Security:** Coordinate with Security (City Manager's Office) to request that security perform COVID screening procedures on individuals entering the building and be present until the end of the meeting. Confirm security arrangements on the day of the meeting with Steve Varvel.

**Broadcast/streaming:** For meetings to be broadcast or streamed, coordinate staffing in advance with Raul Merlo in Communications. The board will be responsible for setting up a Zoom webinar, and Broadcast will broadcast and record the meeting from City Hall. Other recommendations:

- Meeting host start the Zoom meeting 30 minutes prior to the meeting time to allow for testing.
- Meeting Chair have a laptop to view the meeting so they can see the "raise hand" action by staff, board members and the public who are participating virtually.

**Virtual participation:** Staff should confirm that a physical quorum will be present for the meeting (workshops may be held completely virtually if no action will be taken).

- Board members participating *virtually* must file the affidavit of unusual circumstances at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. All votes must be taken by voice roll call.
- For meetings that will not be broadcast/recorded by Communications, it is recommended that all members participate from an internet device to allow participants to view one another in the meeting.
- **IT Support:** Coordinate with IT Services *in advance* to ensure that staff and board members can connect internet devices to the internet during the meeting. It is recommended that participants use the City network rather than the guest Wifi for consistent access.

### **Meeting operations:**

- It is recommended that at least two staff members attend to greet and seat the board members as they arrive, call roll call, record votes and assist with issues that may arise.
- If all board members will not fit at the dais, additional members may be seated in the audience area and speak at the lectern. Wheelchair access to the dais is available through the Clerk's Office (with security assistance).

**Public comment:** Individuals may give public comment in person at the lectern or virtually by phone/video access. For "hybrid" meetings that will not be broadcast/recorded by Communications, it is recommended that staff provide a laptop at the lectern so that comments may be shared virtually.