



## **Disruption of Remote Participation During a Council Meeting Policy**

### **1. Background**

Senate Bill 707 (2025) amended the Brown Act to require eligible legislative bodies to adopt, on or before July 1, 2026, a policy addressing how the agency will respond to disruptions in telephonic or internet service that prevent members of the public from attending or observing a meeting remotely. This policy is adopted to comply with that requirement and to ensure continuity of public participation during technical disruptions.

### **2. Purpose**

This policy establishes procedures for responding to a disruption in the telephonic or internet services that provide two-way remote public access to meetings of the City of South San Francisco – City Council, as required by the Brown Act (Gov. Code § 54953.4). The policy ensures transparency, public participation, and continuity of government during technology disruptions.

### **3. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy:

- “Disruption” means any failure, outage, or other interruption that prevents members of the public from attending or observing the meeting via these remote access services.
- “Presiding Officer” means the Mayor, Vice Mayor, or other member of the City Council who is presiding over the meeting, pursuant to the adopted City Council Procedures and Protocols Handbook.
- “Remote access services” or “service” means the two-way telephonic service and/or two-way audiovisual platform used to provide real-time remote public attendance and observation of meetings.

### **4. Applicability**

This policy applies to all open and public meetings of the South San Francisco City Council at which remote public participation is offered or required under the Brown Act. Consistent with

California Government Code Section 54953.4(b)(1)(A)(i)(II), this policy does not apply to meetings held to do any of the following:

1. Attend a judicial or administrative proceeding to which the City is a party.
2. Inspect real or personal property, provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the real or personal property.
3. Meet with elected or appointed officials of the United States or the State of California, solely to discuss a legislative or regulatory issue affecting the City and over which the federal or state officials have jurisdiction.
4. Meet in or nearby a facility owned by the City, provided that the topic of the meeting is limited to items directly related to the facility.
5. Meet in an emergency situation pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.5.

## **5. Procedures in the Event of a Service Disruption**

### **5.1 Response to Service Disruption**

If the Presiding Officer or Clerk becomes aware of a disruption to the agency's remote access services that prevents members of the public from attending or observing the meeting remotely:

1. The Presiding Officer or Clerk shall immediately announce the disruption to the public.
2. The Presiding Officer shall then call for a recess of the open session. During the recess, the body may meet in closed session if authorized.
3. When calling for a recess of the open session, the Presiding Officer shall state clearly that the meeting will reconvene immediately when the service is restored, or after one hour if the City Council makes the required finding described in Section 7.3 of this Policy.
4. Staff shall make good-faith efforts to diagnose and restore the disrupted service.
5. The meeting shall remain in recess for at least one hour or until service is restored, **whichever is sooner**. The recess period may be extended if restoration efforts are ongoing.

## **6. Efforts to Restore Service**

The Information Technology Department shall make good-faith efforts to restore remote access services, which may include:

- Troubleshooting platform or teleconferencing software.
- Resetting or replacing audiovisual equipment.
- Attempting alternative connection methods.
- Contacting the necessary support staff or service providers.
- Switching to back-up equipment or platforms, if available.

## **7. Reconvening the Open Session**

### **7.1. Timing**

The open session may be reconvened after at **least one hour** has elapsed from the time of disruption or as soon as service is restored, whichever occurs earlier.

### **7.2. If Service Is Restored**

If the remote access service is restored before or at the time the meeting reconvenes, the meeting shall continue as normal.

### **7.3. If Service Is Not Restored**

If service has not been restored after one hour, the City of South San Francisco City Council may adjourn the meeting or reconvene. If the City Council decides to reconvene, before conducting any other business, it shall adopt, by roll-call vote, a formal finding affirming that reasonable efforts were made to resolve the disruption and that resuming the meeting serves the public interest more than further delaying the meeting to attempt to restore service. The following is an example of the required finding:

*“The City of South San Francisco has made good-faith efforts to restore telephonic or internet service in accordance with its adopted policy, and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.”*

## **8. Recordkeeping**

The City Clerk shall enter a brief statement into the meeting minutes, including the following:

- The nature and time of the disruption
- The restoration efforts undertaken
- The time the meeting was reconvened (if applicable)

## **9. Review and Updates**

This policy may be amended by the South San Francisco City Council at a noticed public meeting in open session, not on the consent calendar.