



CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

City Council Agenda Communication

Meeting Dates: February 2, 2026 (First Reading Ordinance)
February 16, 2026 (Second Reading Ordinance)

Prepared By: Jon Oliphant, AICP, Planning & Development Director

Agenda Item: First and Second Reading Ordinances – Allowing Remote Attendance for City Boards and Commissions

Explanation: The City Council approved an ordinance on January 5 to expand the allowance for remote attendance to include “unexpected child care obligations” and “performance of active military duty as a service member.” Prior to that amendment, the City’s Rules of Procedure recognized three reasons for remote attendance:

- Illness or disability;
- Employment or City business; and
- A family or other emergency

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Action Requested: The current ordinance aligns with State statute. Discussion held at the January Committee of the Whole meeting indicated consensus on the drafting of an ordinance that would allow for remote attendance by eligible Boards and Commissions. This would allow those members that have an eligible reason that prohibits in-person attendance to potentially be able to participate remotely. A first reading ordinance is scheduled for the February 2 City Council meeting and a second reading ordinance will be scheduled for the February 16 meeting.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF WASHINGTON CODE TO
AUTHORIZE MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS TO
ELECTRONICALLY ATTEND THEIR RESPECTIVE MEETINGS**

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/7) allows electronic attendance by members of City Boards and Commissions at public meetings of these Boards and Commissions when such persons are unable to attend in-person for the reasons permitted under Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of Washington currently authorizes electronic attendance by City Council members at City Council meetings under Section 2-61 of the Washington City Code; and

WHEREAS, the City of Washington now proposes an amendment to the Washington City Code to allow electronic attendance by members of City Boards and Commissions at public meetings of these Boards and Commissions, which proposed amendments are hereinafter set forth; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that adoption of the proposed amendments serves the best interests of the City of Washington and its citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, TAZEWELL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS HOME RULE POWERS, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals shall be and are hereby incorporated as findings of fact as if said recitals were fully set forth herein.

Section 2. Section 2-61 (entitled "Attendance at Meetings") of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Washington is hereby amended as follows (additions are indicated by **bold underline**; deletions by ~~strikeout~~):

Sec. 2-61. - Attendance at meetings.

- (a) Alderpersons shall attend all meetings of the city council including all committee of the whole meetings.
- (b) Remote Attendance by Council Members: Any member of the City Council may attend and participate in any open or closed meeting of said public body from a remote location via electronic means provided that such attendance is in compliance with the rules set forth herein and any other applicable laws.
 - a. Prerequisites. Any member of the City Council shall be provided the opportunity to attend an open meeting via electronic means from a remote location if a quorum is physically present at the meeting site, the quorum votes to approve the attendance in the open session by electronic means, and the requesting member meets the following conditions:

- i. The member must notify the City Clerk at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled meeting, unless such notice is impractical, so that necessary communications equipment can be arranged. Said notification to the City Clerk shall be in writing by email. Inability to make the necessary technical arrangements will result in denial of a request for electronic attendance.
 - ii. The member must assert one (1) of the five (5) following reasons why he or she is unable to physically attend the meeting:
 - 1. due to personal illness or disability;
 - 2. due to employment purposes or other City business;
 - 3. due to a family emergency or other emergency;
 - 4. unexpected child care obligations;
 - 5. performance of active military duty as a service member. "Active military duty" has the same meaning as "Active service" in Section 1-10 of the Service Member Employment and Reemployment Rights Act." "Service member" means a resident of Illinois who is a member of any component of the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard of any state, the District of Columbia, a commonwealth, or a territory of the United States.
 - b. Quorum and Vote Required. Providing the above prerequisites have been met and following roll call to establish that a quorum is physically present at the meeting site, the presiding officer shall inquire of the City Council if there are any objections to the request to allow the member to remotely attend the meeting via electronic means. If no objection is raised, the request to allow the member to remotely attend the meeting via electronic means shall be deemed unanimously approved. However, if an objection is raised by any member of the City Council, a vote must be taken to allow each remote participation via electronic means. The motion must be approved by a vote of a majority of the City Council.
 - c. Adequate Equipment Required. Any member participating electronically and other members of the City Council must be able to communicate effectively, and members of the audience must be able to hear all communications at the meeting site. Before allowing remote attendance via electronic means at any meeting, the City Council shall provide equipment adequate to accomplish this objective at the meeting site.
- (c) **Members of City boards and commissions may also electronically attend their respective board and commission meetings consistent with and in the manner provided in this section. The board or commission member seeking to attend remotely shall contact the City Clerk as provided herein.**

Section 3. Section 12-4 (entitled “Chairperson, quorum, and compensation”) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Washington is hereby amended as follows (additions are indicated by **bold underline**; deletions by ~~strikeout~~):

Sec. 12-4. - Chairperson, quorum, attendance, and compensation.

Board members shall elect a chairperson from their own membership. A majority of a board constitutes a quorum for the conduct of all business. Members of boards and commissions shall serve without compensation.

Members of City boards and commissions may electronically attend their respective meetings consistent with and in the manner provided in Section 2-61 of the City Code.

Section 4. This Ordinance is hereby ordered to be published in pamphlet form by the City Clerk and said Clerk is ordered to keep at least three (3) copies hereof available for public inspection in the future and in accordance with the Illinois Municipal Code.

Section 5. This Ordinance is in addition to all other ordinances on the subject and shall be construed therewith except as to that part in direct conflict with any other ordinance, and in the event of such conflict, the provisions hereof shall govern.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication in the manner provided by law.

**PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON,
TAZEWELL COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN REGULAR AND PUBLIC SESSION THIS ____
DAY OF _____, 2026.**

AYES: _____

NAYS: _____

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk