

COUNCIL POLICY			
Subject: INTERNET AND TELEPHONIC SERVICE DISRUPTION POLICY FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS	Policy Number	Effective Date	Number of Pages
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1. BACKGROUND:

Amendments Senate Bill 707 (2025) made to the Ralph M. Brown Act (“Brown Act”) that require the City Council to allow, beginning July 1, 2026, subject to certain specified exceptions, members of the public to participate in City Council meetings remotely through either (1) two-way telephonic service and access to live webcasting of the meeting or (2) two-way audiovisual platforms. The amendments also require the City Council to adopt, on or before July 1, 2026, a policy addressing how the City will respond to disruptions in telephonic and/or internet service that prevent members of the public from participating in a City Council meeting remotely. This policy is adopted, effective July 1, 2026, 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 Council, as required by the Brown Act (Gov. Code § 54953.4). The policy ensures transparency and appropriately balances the need for remote public participation with the need for continuity of government operations during technology disruptions.

3. DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this policy:

- “Disruption” means any failure, outage, or other interruption in the City’s telephonic or internet service that prevents members of the public from participating in or observing the City Council meeting via the City’s established remote public access services.
- “Remote public access services” means the two-way telephonic service and/or two-way audiovisual platform used to provide real-time remote public participation and observation of the public portions of City Council meetings. Remote public access does not include providing members of the public with the opportunity to provide public comment through video.

4. APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all open public meetings of the City Council except in those limited circumstances where the Brown Act provides that remote public access is not required. This policy does not apply to meetings of other Boards or Commissions.

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Adopted by Resolution No. _____

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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 City’s remote access services that prevents members of the public from participating in or observing City Council meetings remotely:

- 5.1.1 The Presiding Officer or Clerk shall immediately announce the disruption to the public.
- 5.1.2 The Presiding Officer may then call for a recess of the open session or convene into a properly noticed closed session.
- 5.1.3 Staff shall begin efforts to diagnose and restore the disrupted service.
- 5.1.4 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 by the Presiding Officer if restoration efforts are ongoing.

5.2 Efforts to Restore Service

The City shall make good faith efforts to restore its remote access services for the City Council meeting, which may include:

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

The City Clerk or designee shall document the restoration efforts undertaken and the Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Office (CIRO) shall prepare related communications for the community in English and Spanish, and other languages as applicable under Santa Rosa City Code 1-10. CIRO has discretion on communication and outreach methods but should include a brief summary in applicable languages specifying what action was taken during the disrupted meeting, and share across various communication platforms like GovDelivery Council meeting subscribers (or similar notification system), City Connections newsletter, or social media.

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6. RECONVENING THE OPEN SESSION:

6.1 Timing

The open session portion of the City Council meeting 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.

6.2 If Service Is Restored

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

6.3 If Service Is **Not** Restored

6.3.1 If service has not been restored after no less than one hour of restoration efforts, the City Council may reconvene in open session and:

6.3.1.1 Adjourn the meeting; or

6.3.1.2 Reconvene the meeting in open session without public access services restored, provided that following designated staff's oral summary of efforts taken to restore service, Council makes a finding that is substantially similar to the finding below by motion, with all votes cast by roll call: "The City of Santa Rosa has made good faith efforts to restore [telephonic and/or internet] service in accordance with its adopted policy, and the public interest in reconvening the meeting in full or in part, limited to time-sensitive agenda items requiring action, outweighs the public interest in remote public access."

6.3.1.3 Notwithstanding section 6.3.1.2 above, if there is no Spanish language interpretation available for members of the public participating in the meeting in-person because of the ongoing public access disruption, the Council may proceed with the meeting only as set forth in City Code section 1-10-30 (M).

7. RECORDKEEPING

If a disruption in public access services occurs during a City Council meeting, a brief statement shall be entered into the meeting minutes, including the following:

- The nature and time of the disruption
- A summary of the restoration efforts undertaken
- The time the meeting was reconvened (if applicable)
- Any finding adopted pursuant to Section 6.3.1.2.

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8. REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy like other City Council policies, may be reviewed and amended from time-to-time by the City Council. As expressly required by the Brown Act, amendments to this policy must be approved at a properly noticed public meeting in open session, and may not be approved on the consent calendar.