



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

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CC - ACTION ITEM: Discussion and Direction Regarding Providing Childcare at City Council, Commission, Board, and Committee Meetings.

Meeting Date: June 24, 2024

Contact Person/Dept.: Jesse Mays/City Manager's Office

Phone Number: (310) 253-6000

Fiscal Impact: Yes No **General Fund:** Yes No

Attachments: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (06/19/2024)

Department Approval: John Nachbar, City Manager (05/30/2024)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council discuss and provide direction related to childcare at City Council, Commission, Board, and Committee meetings.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

On January 27, 2020, the City Council approved a resolution making several changes recommended by the City Council's Equity Subcommittee to the City Council's Policy Statement pertaining to City Commission, Boards and Committees ("CBC Policy"). The staff report that accompanied the resolution stated that the recommendations being proposed included "Offering childcare at all Commission, Committee and Board meetings, as well as City Council meetings. This would require that children be toilet trained and registered at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting." At the time, the estimated cost to offer this service was \$9,600 per year.

Soon after the January 27, 2020 meeting, the COVID-19 pandemic began. The City began holding City Council meetings, as well as City Commission, Boards, and Committee meetings, only virtually online, using video conferencing. This policy continued for over two years. City Council meetings resumed being open to public attendance in person on April 11, 2022. Other City Commissions, Boards and Committee meetings also resumed in-person meetings in April 2022. On March 12, 2024, Mayor McMorrin inquired about the status of offering childcare during City Council meetings.

Note that although the January 27, 2020 staff report indicates the policy change related to childcare at public meetings, and the City Council approved resolution references adopting “a resolution approving proposed changes to the City policy on Commissions, Committees and Boards pertaining to...childcare...” neither the Council approved resolution nor the revised CBC Policy attached to it contained language referencing childcare at meetings. The CBC Policy was again revised on May 10, 2021 and on March 23, 2023, and childcare language was also not included in the CBC Policy as part of those revisions.

Cost and Staffing

Providing childcare at any given City Council, Commission, Board or Committee meeting would require two staff: one full-time coordinator and one part-time staff member from the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services (PRCS) Department. The City’s cost to staff each meeting would be approximately \$465, based on 4 hours of overtime pay for the full-time coordinator and four hours of regular time pay for the part time recreation leader. Assuming 24 City Council meetings per year and \$300 for supplies, the annual cost for City Council meetings would be approximately \$11,460. The cost would increase if additional Commission, Board or Committee meetings were added.

Staffing would be challenging for a program of this nature. PRCS currently faces difficulties filling its existing needs for part-time staff to work occasional, limited hours. Requiring the limited number of trained, full-time staff capable of filling the position to work additional overtime hours puts them at risk of burnout, especially if the policy were to include all Commission, Board, and Committee meetings. Full time PRCS staff who work with children are already called-up to work on holidays and other days when Culver City students are off-school to provide City-run childcare, so this would further limit their non-working time. Another challenge to the program is that PRCS staff are not trained to work with children under the age of 5. For that reason, a minimum of age of 5 is recommended.

Examples from other Cities

Staff has identified one City in California that provides free childcare at all City Council meetings (Seaside), one other City nationally that provides the service at a limited number of community meetings (Pittsburgh), and three other Cities nationally that used to or planned to provide the service but no longer provide the service (Ithaca, Hayward, and Long Beach).

City of Seaside, California

Seaside offers free childcare for its bi-monthly City Council meetings if requested at least 48 hours ahead of the meeting. According to Seaside staff, the service is not used very often, and when used it is most frequently for children of city staff who are working at the meeting.

City of Ithaca, New York

Ithaca began offering childcare for all city council and commission meetings on May 1, 2019. According to Ithaca, they were the first City in the country to do so. The service was stopped during the pandemic and has not been restarted.

City of Hayward, California

In February 2020, Hayward briefly became the first city in California to offer childcare during its City Council meetings. Parents were required to request the service in advance by the Friday prior to the Tuesday meeting. In the short period during which the service was offered before the COVID-19 pandemic ended in-person meetings, the service was made available one time and used by approximately two participants. When in-person meetings resumed after the pandemic, the City used hybrid meetings to continue to allow participants to attend the meetings and speak virtually. As such, they did not resume offering childcare during

public meetings.

City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In late 2017, the City of Pittsburgh announced a program to offer free child-care to residents during certain community meetings, up to 20 per year. That service was eliminated during the pandemic. On October 11, 2023, the Pittsburgh decided to reinstate the program by offering childcare for those attending community events sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, up \$45,000 per year.

City of Long Beach

Beginning in February 2020, the City of Long Beach announced that it planned to offer childcare as part of a pilot program for kids ages 2 to 13 during City Council Meetings. Long Beach was planning to work with the nonprofit Los Angeles Education Partnership to provide the service at City Hall, adjacent to the Civic Chambers. Childcare was to be provided on an as-needed basis. The announced program required parents to request the service at least 48 hours in advance, and there must have been at least three children for the service to be offered during any given meeting. The providers were not going to perform feedings or diaper changes. However, the pandemic began shortly after the program was announced and it was never implemented. Currently there are no plans to offer the service. Long Beach does not offer remote participation for the public in meetings.

Other Cities

The City Clerk's office polled the California statewide City Clerk list serve to find out if other cities offer or used to offer childcare during City Council or other meetings, or if other cities were considering the policy. Responses were received from nine cities. Seven of the cities do not offer the service and have not considered it (Hillsborough, Stanton, Napa, La Habra, Fowler, Torrance, Solvang). The City of Petaluma said they have offered it at one meeting in the past when a specific topic was being discussed, and they may do it in the future for specific meetings, depending on the topic. The City of Seaside, who's service is detailed above, was the final respondent to the poll.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact to discussing this issue. The fiscal impact will depend on the direction given by the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

MOTION

That the City Council:

Discuss and provide direction related to childcare at City Council, Commission, Board and Committee meetings.