

RESOLUTION NO. 23-01

MAKING FINDINGS TO ALLOW CONTINUED USE OF TELECONFERENCING FOR MEETINGS OF THE RICHMOND RENT BOARD PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF AB 361

WHEREAS, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor adopted a series of Executive Orders allowing the legislative bodies of local governments to meet remotely via teleconference through September 30, 2021 so long as other provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act were followed; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2021, the Governor signed into law as an urgency measure, AB 361 a bill that amends the Brown Act to allow local policy bodies to continue to meet by teleconferencing during a state of emergency without complying with restrictions in state law that would otherwise apply, provided that the policy bodies make certain findings at least once every 30 days; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Rent Board is a local governmental body that was established as an independent agency and vested with broad powers of administering and executing the provisions of the Fair Rent, Just Cause, and Homeowner Protection Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Richmond Municipal Code Section 11.100.060(m), to ensure the integrity and autonomy of the Rent Board, Measure L mandates the Rent Board “be an integral part of the government of the City [of Richmond]”, and establishes that the Rent Board “shall exercise its powers and duties under [Chapter 11.100] independent from the City Council, City Manager, and City Attorney, except by request of the [Rent] Board”; and

WHEREAS, as an independent agency, the Richmond Rent Board operates independent from and is not subject the City of Richmond City Council’s Resolutions governing boards, commissions, and other local policy bodies; and

WHEREAS, given its degree of independence and autonomy from City Council, the City of Richmond Rent Board has separately considered the current state of health guidance related to public meetings in Contra Costa County and finds it necessary to continue with remote meetings for the next 30 days to promote public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, in its future considerations of whether remote meetings are still necessary, the City of Richmond Rent Board shall consider and take into account the City of Richmond City Council’s decision on whether to continue remotely, prior to reaching its ultimate findings on the issue; and

WHEREAS, the entire State of California remains under a proclaimed state of emergency as declared by the Governor of the state of California related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Public Health continues to require the use of face coverings for the unvaccinated in indoor settings in order to help stop the spread of the virus. The Health Officer for Contra Costa County published “Recommendations for Safely Holding Public Meetings” on September 20, 2021. Those recommendations “strongly recommend” on-online meetings, that local agencies should provide options for the public to participate without having to attend meetings in

person, and that social distancing should be used, including six feet of spacing between all in attendance; and

WHEREAS, without limiting any requirements under applicable federal, state or local pandemic-related rules, orders or directives of the Health Officer of Contra Costa County, who has previously advised that for group gatherings indoors, such as meetings of city council's, boards and commissions, people can increase safety and greatly reduce risks to health and safety of attendees from COVID-19 by maximizing ventilation, wearing well-fitting masks, using physical distancing where the vaccination status of attendees is not known, and considering holding the meeting remotely if feasible, especially for long meetings, with many attendees with unknown vaccination status and where ventilation may not be optimal; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond has maintained its declaration of a local emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommends masks wearing, vaccinations and social distancing while indoors; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond Rent Board has met remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic and can continue to do so in a manner that allows public participation and transparency while minimizing health risks to members, staff, and the public who would be present with in-person meetings while this emergency continues.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City of Richmond Rent Board finds as follows:

1. As described above, the State of California, and the City of Richmond remains in a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this meeting the City of Richmond Rent Board has considered the circumstances of the state of emergency; and
2. As described above State and County, and local officials continue to recommend measures to promote physical distancing and other social distancing measures, in some settings; and
3. As described above meetings of this body in person would present imminent risks to the safety of attendees, and the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of members to meet safely in public; and:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the City of Richmond Rent Board approves the continued use of teleconferencing for public meetings of City legislative bodies for the next 30 days based on the findings required by Government Code Section 549539(e), as amended by AB 361; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That at least for the next 30 days, meetings of the City of Richmond Rent Board will continue to occur exclusively by teleconferencing technology (and not by any in-person meetings or any other meetings with public access to the places where any policy body member is present for the meeting). Such meeting of the City of Richmond Rent Board that occur by teleconferencing technology will provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the body and will otherwise occur in a manner that protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the public attending the meeting via teleconferencing, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Executive Director of the Rent Program is directed to place a resolution substantially similar to this resolution on the agenda of a future meeting of the City of Richmond Rent Board within the next 30 days.

APPROVED by the City of Richmond Rent Board at a regular meeting on January 18, 2023 by the following vote:

AYES: Boardmembers Conner, Johnson, Vasilas, Vice Chair Mishek and Chair Finlay.
NOES: None.
ABSTAINED: None.
ABSENT: None.

VIRGINIA FINLAY
RENT BOARD CHAIR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ATTEST:

CHARLES OSHINUGA
GENERAL COUNSEL

CYNTHIA SHAW
RENT BOARD CLERK

I certify that the forgoing is a true copy of the **Resolution No. 23-01**, passed and adopted by the Rent Board of the City of Richmond.



Cynthia Shaw
Rent Board Clerk

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