MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Stephen Elkins, Chief Information Officer

Date: May 8, 2018

SUBLECT: Staff Update to Resolution 20170202-043 General Citizen Communication via Videoconferencing

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The purpose of this memorandum is to present the results and recommendations from the General Citizen Communication via videoconferencing implementation during regularly scheduled, open City Council meetings, as defined in Section 2-5-28 of the City Code.

Background

City Council Resolution No. 20170202-043 directed the City Manager to 1) develop a methodology to analyze the expansion of library services afforded to residents through the use of specific library locations, for all new services provided, including but not limited to access to General Citizen Communication, and teleconferencing by military families, community organizations, and small-business start-ups; 2) develop a plan for extending the expanded services beyond the initial nine libraries associated with the current funding, and such extension of expanded services shall be to the Geographic Gap Areas, in order to determine appropriate libraries or other locations in which to offer these services, and to identify additional resources, if any, which are needed to train staff and provide equipment; and 3) analyze the effectiveness of the expansion of library services with regard to offering new opportunities for more residents throughout the City to participate in General Citizen Communication and other civic-engagement forums afforded by these expanded services.

Result

Communications & Technology Management (CTM) worked with the City Clerk's Office (OCC), Public Information Office (PIO), and the Library to expand the offering of current library services to include General Citizen Communication via videoconferencing during regularly scheduled, open City Council meetings. Nine libraries were identified for the initial deployment: Ruiz Branch, Manchaca Road Branch,

Spicewood Springs Branch, Carver Branch, Little Walnut Creek Branch, Yarborough Branch, Old Quarry Branch, Southeast Community Branch, and Hampton Branch at Oak Hill. CTM worked with library staff, from each of the nine libraries, to develop and test facilitation procedures of remote citizen communications during Council meetings from the libraries. Google provided conferencing equipment for Citizen Communications, which was installed and tested at the nine libraries and Library staff have been trained on how to use the equipment.

In July of 2017, the City of Austin announced that the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation received additional funding from Google to install the Google Conferencing equipment in *every* City of Austin Public Library; the installation for the additional libraries has been completed as of this month. In addition to using the Google conferencing equipment for citizen communication during Council meetings, the Library will also offer the service for civic engagement, military families, community organizations, small start-up businesses, and to connect individuals to community meetings held at libraries. CTM will continue to work with all libraries in regards to training and testing for General Citizen Communication via videoconferencing. The Google conferencing equipment at all Libraries was paid for in full by Google, and the City did not pay for any of the costs.

Analysis

To date, no citizen has utilized the Google conferencing technology for citizen communication at a City Council meeting since the passage of Resolution 20170203-043. However, Google conferencing equipment is being used by Library patrons at City of Austin Libraries for private communication, job interviews, and other types of communication.

Recommendation

Continue to promote the remote video conferencing service offerings through the Austin Public Library and video conference usage by PIO, Mayor and Council, as well as provide the funding, technical and training support to maintain the system so that it can continue to serve as a viable communication tool for the public.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
        Mark Washington, Assistant City Manager
        Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager
        Roosevelt Weeks, Director of Libraries
        Jannette Goodall, City Clerk
        Kory Ellis, City Hall IT Manager