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Item #3

Date: September 8, 2022  
To: Board of Directors  
From: Anthony Constantouros, Interim General Manager  
Subject: Hybrid Meetings

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### **Recommendations**

1. Approve the hybrid system that will be explained by Mr. John Shike of ASG, LLC.
2. Consider any equipment/computers that that are recommended for system operation.
3. Authorize \$1600 for a Senior Engineer to handle all technical aspects of the first two hybrid meetings.
4. Report back to the Board regarding the utilization of a local IT firm to fully manage hybrid system operations for several months.
5. Coordinate and assist the Kensington Fire Protection District and other community organizations that may have meeting and technology requirements
6. Consider commencing with hybrid meetings at the October 13, 2022, Board Meeting.

### **Background**

Virtual/Zoom meetings have been utilized by most local governments during the COVID pandemic. In Kensington, the Board of Directors initiated zoom meetings in early 2020 and continued these meetings to the present time. The Zoom technology resulted in some new procedures for Board interaction and public participation. This meeting format offered participation from safe remote locations but did not allow in-person interaction. Local governments are now transitioning to hybrid meetings which allow the flexibility for both remote and in-person capabilities.

Hybrid meetings would offer the public, Board, staff, and others the flexibility of attending either virtually/remotely by using Zoom or attending in-person at the Community Center. With the Community Center now completed, the possibility of hybrid meetings in Kensington can be evaluated. Public meetings will still require some Covid protocols to assure a safe meeting environment.

Most local governments do not have health monitoring capabilities. Typical requirements for attending public meetings include social distancing and encouraging the wearing of face masks. Face masks could be optional for fully vaccinated attendees. Another factor related to in-person meetings is whether attendance is mandatory. Since there are individual private health and safety issues, it is recommended that District Board Members and District staff attend meetings on a voluntary basis. A copy of the Contra Costa County Health Services recommendations for safely holding public meetings is available with this agenda item. It should be noted that COVID health issues are not fully resolved with variants still being monitored. The holding of in-person meetings could be discontinued in the event of a serious health emergency.

### **Discussion**

The holding of an in-person Board Meeting would be a milestone and could initiate the start of on-going hybrid meetings. The incorporation of technology and offering alternative methods of attending and participating in public meetings is the beginning of a new era in citizen involvement. The District will need the expert advice of a professional to evaluate the logistics and technicalities of the meetings.

Mr. John Shike of the Advanced Systems Group, LLC (ASG) in Emeryville, will be available to review system operation and the mechanics of the revised meeting format. ASG has completed several projects for Kensington in recent years and is familiar with the operation of the AV system. They are in the process of upgrading the system to allow for hybrid meetings. Based on the information that will be discussed, the Board may wish to consider changes or upgrades to the system. The Board may also decide to defer hybrid meetings.

Since the KPPCCSD does not have on-staff technical expertise, Mr. Shike has suggested that a Senior Engineer be present for the initial two hybrid Board Meetings. The engineer would assure the proper operation of all system and troubleshoot any glitches. The total cost for these services for two Board Meetings would be \$1600. After these initial meetings, the Board should consider contracting with a local IT firm to provide these services for a few meetings. With some additional experience and training District staff may be able to assume these responsibilities.

Hybrid meetings will likely continue to improve and change with experience. There may also be periodic updates and enhancements as the District gains experience with the new format and as new technologies become available.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

The upgrade to the current system was previously approved by the General Manager for \$4,281.30. A Senior Engineer for two Board Meetings would cost \$1600. The cost for possibly utilizing staff from a local IT firm has not yet been determined.

### **Attachment:**

- Contra Costa County Health Services: Recommendations for safely holding public meetings