ORDINANCE NO
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND LITTLE ROCK, ARK., REV. CODE § 2-50
(1988) TO DEFINE THE WORD PRESENT TO INCLUDE ATTENDANCE
BY ELECTRONIC MEANS; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.
WHEREAS, the City is required by law to have a majority of the Elected Members of the Board of
Directors present to vote on a particular issue in order to adopt the measure; and,
WHEREAS, under normal circumstances it is common that a Member of the Board of Directors has
to recuse, or cannot be physically present at a regular, recessed, special, or other meeting of the Board with
the result that a measure, which may be in the best interests of the citizens, or which may be appropriate to
defeat cannot finally be acted upon it is physically impossible to have a sufficient number of affirmative
votes either to deal with procedural issues, or to make a final vote on the measure; and,
WHEREAS, the City has a dedicated Government Access Cable Television Channel which would
permit a Board Member within the City to view a particular meeting as it is being held and, there are other
electronic means for a member to participate in a Board Meeting voluntarily despite the fact the member is
not physically present within the Board Meeting Room; and,
WHEREAS, if this ordinance is approved, a Member could be deemed present for purposes of
discussion and voting; and,
WHEREAS, the City Attorney has been unable to find any law that prohibits a municipal corporation
from amending its bylaws to permit such a definition of the word present; and,
WHEREAS, it is important to read this ordinance in a liberal fashion to achieve its purposes and to
enable the use of different technologies as to participation, while at the same time assuring that the public
can view the action of a member not physically present in the meeting room of the Board of Directors;
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY
OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS:
Section 1. Little Rock, Ark., Rev. Code \hat{A} 2-50 (1988) is hereby amended to read as follows:
(a) A quorum is a requirement to transact business during a meeting of the Board
of Directors. A quorum is the minimum number of members of the Board of Directors,
including the Mayor for this purpose, present at a regular, recessed, called, or other
meeting of the Board of Directors in order to transact business legally. Before the
Mayor calls the Board Meeting to order, he should be reasonably sure that a quorum is

1 2 present. If a quorum is not present, all the group can do is fix a time for another meeting and adjourn or recess.

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(b) For purposes of this section, the word "present," means:

(i) That the Mayor or Board Member is physically located at the place the Board Meeting is being held; or,

6 (ii) That a Board Member is within the corporate limits of the City, 7 but is appearing by electronic means; provided that, for a Board Member 8 to be present by electronic means, the Mayor, or the Member who is 9 presiding over the meeting, is physically present at the place where the 10 Board Meeting is being held. Board Members appearing at meetings 11 pursuant to this subsection shall be entitled to participate by electronic 12 means in matters coming before the Board, including discussion, debate and voting, as if they were physically present at the meeting as long as a 13 14 City Staff Person is with the Member in order to confirm the Member's 15 identity and location, or the Member participates by electronic or other 16 means which allows the Mayor, other Members of the Board of Directors, 17 and the public, to see and hear a Member participating electronically; or,

18 (iii) If necessary to approve a measure that is deemed by the Mayor to 19 be vital of the interests of the City, a Board Member is located outside the 20 corporate limits of the city on City business, but is appearing by electronic 21 means; provided that, for a Board Member to be present by electronic 22 means, the Mayor, or the Member who is presiding over the meeting, is 23 physically present at the place where the Board Meeting is being held. 24 Board Members appearing at meetings pursuant to this Subsection shall 25 be entitled to participate by electronic means in matters coming before the 26 Board, including discussion, debate and voting, as if they were physically 27 present at the meeting as long as a City Staff Person is with the Member 28 in order to confirm the Member's identity and location; or, the Member 29 participates by electronic or other means which allows the Mayor, other 30 Members of the Board of Directors, and the public, to see and hear a 31 Member participating electronically;

33 Section 2. *Effective Dates*. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect for a period of ninety (90)
 34 days after the date of its passage.

(c) A majority of the Board, including the position of Mayor, is a quorum.

1 Section 3. Severability. In the event any title, section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, 2 subparagraph, item, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this ordinance is declared or adjudged to be invalid 3 or unconstitutional, such declaration or adjudication shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance 4 which shall remain in full force and effect as if the portion so declared or so adjudged invalid or 5 unconstitutional was not originally a part of this ordinance.

6 Section 4. *Repealer*. All ordinances and resolutions, or parts of ordinances or resolutions, inconsistent
 7 with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

8 Section 5. *Emergency*. Because the restrictions of Arkansas State Law and the City's Code of Ethics 9 sometimes makes it difficult or impossible for a majority of the Elected Members to act on a measure, 10 particularly when one (1) or more Members of the Board cannot attend because of illness or other 11 obligations, business vital to the citizens and in the best interests of the City cannot always proceed in an 12 appropriate manner. In an age when electronic communications means make it possible and practical for a 13 person within the City to participate in a Board Meeting, particularly when that person can view the Board 14 Meeting by means of the City's dedicated Government Access Cable Channel, and to be involved in the 15 discussion and voting on a particular issue, the Board should enact a measure which permits such 16 participation. At the time of this ordinance, the Board is facing several crucial issues that are hampered by 17 absences and recusals, one of which could unnecessarily cost the City several hundreds of thousands of 18 dollars if it is not quickly resolved. The inability to timely deal with City business and the unnecessary 19 expenditure of resources is not in the best interests of the citizens. Indeed, the ability to vote on measures 20 and save the citizens substantial tax dollars is essential to the public health, safety and welfare. An 21 emergency is therefore declared to exist and this ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after 22 the time of its passage.

23 PASSED: March 25, 2020

24 **ATTEST:**

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27 Susan Langley, City Clerk

28 APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

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31	Thomas M. Carpenter, City Attorney

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APPROVED:

Frank Scott, Jr., Mayor