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5 **A RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE**
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7 amending Chapter 1 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances to allow
8 remote access to County Board meetings and promote participation in the legislative
9 process
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12 WHEREAS, the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic spurred innovation in how
13 people work and the rapid adoption of video conferencing technology, with the County
14 Board beginning to conduct the people’s business remotely on March 18, 2020; and
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16 WHEREAS, the County Board updated the Milwaukee County Code of General
17 Ordinances (MCGO) by permitting the use of teleconference technology when it created
18 MCGO Section 1.01(d) – *Remote Meetings* in File No. 20-570; and
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20 WHEREAS, since the onset of the pandemic, the County Board has successfully
21 conducted its legislative oversight functions in hybrid (some attending in person and
22 others via Microsoft Teams) or fully virtual formats; and
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24 WHEREAS, the ability to choose whether to attend in person or remotely allows
25 members to self-isolate if they test positive or have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-
26 19) or other potentially contagious infection and still be able to participate in the
27 proceedings; and
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29 WHEREAS, members of the public have also benefitted from being able to
30 attend a legislative committee hearing remotely so as to minimize the time away from
31 work, childcare responsibilities, and avoiding the cost of travel to the Milwaukee County
32 Courthouse; and
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34 WHEREAS, File No. 22-436, adopted March 24, 2022, appropriated funds to
35 equip County Board meeting rooms with technology to permit virtual access to
36 legislative meetings which was implemented in the fall of 2022; and
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38 WHEREAS, legislators should not be denied the ability to represent their
39 constituents because they are unable to travel to the Courthouse due to health,
40 weather, or other logistical impediment when the technology exists to allow virtual
41 participation and representation; and

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WHEREAS, allowing virtual participation for legislators and public in legislative hearings eliminates an access barrier to the democratic process while promoting equity and participation; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and General Services, at its meeting of March 6, 2023, recommended adoption of File No. 23-293 (vote 3-1); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the option to attend County Board meetings virtually and amends Chapter 1 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances by adopting the following:

AN ORDINANCE

The County Board of Supervisors of the County of Milwaukee does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1.01 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances is hereby amended as follows:

1.01. – Meetings.

- (a) *Annual meeting.* The statutory or annual meeting of the county board shall be convened on the first or second Thursday in November, consistent with Wis. Stat. § 59.11(1)(a), for the purpose of considering reports of the committee on finance on new positions for the next fiscal year as well as recommendations for amendments to the executive's budget.

- (b) *[Regular meetings.]* Regular meetings of the county board shall convene at 9:30 a.m. unless otherwise designated. In order to provide an advanced schedule of regular meeting dates, a regular meeting of the county board shall be scheduled generally on a Thursday within each month, except when otherwise designated by the county board meeting schedule, these rules or by action of the county board. August and November will not have a regularly scheduled meeting of the county board, unless otherwise called for by the county board. The county board chairperson shall provide to the county board, following the first meeting of the board after the election of supervisors, a schedule of county board meetings for the remainder of the term, including the date of the annual meeting provided in § 1.01(a). The first (organizational) meeting of the term shall be held on the third Monday in April of even-numbered years, which is the first day supervisors take office following their election per § 59.10(2)(b), Wis. Stats. The digest (agenda)

83 for each county board meeting shall be established by the county board
84 chairperson or, in his or her absence, by the first vice chairperson or the second
85 vice chairperson.

86 (c) *Special meetings.* A special meeting shall be held only when requested by a
87 majority of the members of the county board, such request to be in writing,
88 addressed and delivered to the county clerk, who shall note the time of such
89 delivery to him/her on such request. Such request shall specify the time and
90 place of such meeting, which shall not be less than forty-eight (48) hours after
91 the delivery of such notice to the county clerk. The request shall identify the
92 purpose of such meeting and shall include reference to such other items as may
93 be required by law, ordinance or board action. Upon receiving such request, the
94 county clerk shall forthwith give notice of the time and place of such meeting by
95 mail to each member of the county board. If the request is delivered to the county
96 clerk less than seventy-two (72) hours before the time of such meeting, the
97 county clerk, in addition to the mailing hereinbefore referred to, shall telephone
98 each supervisor; if any supervisor is not contacted by telephone, the county clerk
99 shall furnish to the sheriff of the county a copy of such notice of time and place of
100 meeting for delivery to unnoticed members of the county board. The sheriff shall
101 thereafter furnish to the county clerk an affidavit of delivery of such notice. The
102 inability of the sheriff to deliver such notice to a supervisor shall not be deemed a
103 defect to the notice requirement under this subsection. Any special meeting may
104 be adjourned from time to time by a vote of a majority of all members of the
105 county board.

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107 (d) *Remote meetings.* The county board ~~shall be equipped may convene and~~
108 ~~meet~~ to conduct business remotely via telephone conference, video conference
109 or other electronic communication provided that the meeting is live-streamed,
110 televised live or otherwise broadcast live to the public., **subject to the following:**

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112 (1) **Supervisors shall have the option to attend any meeting of the**
113 **county board remotely via telephone conference, video conference**
114 **or other electronic communication even if the meeting was not**
115 **designated to be remote.**
116 (2) **Supervisors shall have the ability to attend any meeting of the**
117 **county board in person unless circumstances prohibit a physical**
118 **meeting.**

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120 **SECTION 2.** Section 1.13(c) of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances is
121 amended as follows:
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123 (c) *Committee general procedure.* All meetings of a committee shall be conducted in
124 accordance with the provisions of ss. 19.81—19.98, Wis. Stats. The attendance of
125 a majority of the members thereof shall be requisite for the transaction of business
126 of a committee. A committee member who participates in a meeting of the
127 committee by telephone, video conference, or by other means of
128 telecommunication or electronic communication is considered present. **subject to**
129 **the provisions of sections 1.01(d) and 1.13(e).** Without a majority in attendance,
130 a committee may consider informational items only. Committee agenda are to be
131 prepared so that members of the county board and other interested parties will
132 receive the agenda by United States, electronic or interoffice mail at least twenty-
133 four (24) hours before the scheduled committee meeting. A committee chairperson
134 must schedule a county board referred item within a maximum of two (2) regular
135 county board committee cycles. Once scheduled and publicly noticed, an item may
136 only be withdrawn according to the provisions of section 1.13(d)(8). If the item is
137 withdrawn by sole action of the committee chair pursuant to section 1.13(d)(8), the
138 item must be placed on the committee agenda for the next regularly scheduled
139 meeting and may not be withdrawn again.

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141 The committee coordinator shall enter in appropriate files kept for that purpose, a
142 complete record of all such committee meetings, including attendance, appearances for
143 and against pending matters, and minutes of the proceedings, including all motions
144 made and by whom, how each member voted upon each matter considered, together
145 with the final action by the committee thereon. All actions taken by the committee shall
146 be by roll call vote, however a motion to place on file may be taken by voice vote
147 without objection. No action shall be taken on any proposed ordinance unless it be in
148 written form before the committee.

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150 Except as herein provided and so far as applicable, the rules of procedure of the
151 county board shall apply to committee meetings. Minority rules shall not apply to
152 committee meetings.

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154 After the conclusion of the committee meeting, the committee coordinator shall
155 prepare a separate, written report of the action of the committee upon those matters
156 considered by it which require county board approval, for submission to the county
157 board for action of that body. Such report shall be made up in such manner that the
158 county board may take action upon it as a whole, or may set aside any portion of it for
159 separate action. Any member of any committee may make a minority report of said
160 committee on any recommendation to the board contained in the committee report.
161 Such minority report must be presented when the matter is considered at the meeting of
162 the county board.

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164 Except as provided in the preceding sentence, it is the duty of the committee to
165 make a report to the county board on matters referred to such committee with some
166 definite recommendation for disposition of such matters.

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When members of a committee or joint committee present at any meeting thereof, are, by recorded vote, evenly divided as to the disposition to be made of any subject matter referred to and pending before such committee or joint committee, such subject matter shall be returned to the next meeting of the county board without recommendation and the committee or joint committee shall thereupon be deemed to be discharged from consideration thereof.

SECTION 3. Section 1.13(e) of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances is hereby amended as follows:

(e) *Remote meetings.* Standing committees **shall be equipped** ~~may convene and meet~~ to conduct business remotely via telephone conference, video conference or other electronic communication provided that the meeting is live-streamed, televised live or otherwise broadcast live to the public-, **subject to the following:**

- (1) **Supervisors shall have the option to attend any standing committee meeting of the county board remotely via telephone conference, video conference or other electronic communication even if the meeting was not designated to be remote.**
- (2) **Supervisors shall have the ability to attend standing committee meetings of the county board in person unless circumstances prohibit a physical meeting.**
- (3) **Members of the public wishing to testify shall have the option to attend any standing committee meeting remotely, other than Committee of the Whole, via the electronic communication protocol designated for the meeting.**

SECTION 4. The provisions of this Ordinance shall become effective upon passage and publication.

03/06/23
S:\Committees\2023\March\JLEGS\Resolutions\23-293 resolution re remote access to meetings no edits ars.docx