



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Douglas Schulze, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Caroline Patton, Administrative City Clerk

MEETING DATE: February 13, 2024

SUBJECT: Discussion of Policy to Prohibit Use of Personal Cell Phones on Dais During Meetings

RECOMMENDATION:

A motion directing the City Manager to prepare a policy prohibiting the use of personal cell phones on the dais during public meetings.

BACKGROUND:

Council Member Flynn requested a future agenda item to discuss the use of personal cell phones on the dais. Many city councils have debated the issue of personal digital device use on the dais and some have adopted policies ranging from complete bans on use of personal devices to voluntarily turning off devices during meetings. However, it is frequently recognized that use of electronic devices is necessary because a growing number of cities no longer use printed agenda materials. In fact, many inland empire cities have transitioned to electronic agendas only.

While receiving text messages during meetings isn't illegal, it could create legal problems if a council member receives a message pertaining to a quasi-judicial matter during a hearing if the message is not shared. Generally, city councils have recognized, at a minimum, the value of having personal digital devices for emergency communications with family members and care givers.

JUSTIFICATION:

A City Council policy and amendment to the Manual of Procedures would be appropriate, if the City Council supports a policy prohibiting the use of personal cell phones on the dais during meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff time involved with preparation of a policy and resolution is estimated to be less than 10 hours at an average hourly rate of approximately \$80 for a total cost of less than \$1,000.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Direct City Manager to prepare a policy and resolution prohibiting use of cell phones on the dais during public meetings.
2. Take no action.