



City Council

Approval of Ordinance Amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 9.08 Relating to Interference with a Public Meeting of the City of Olympia

Agenda Date: 7/18/2017
Agenda Item Number: 4.H
File Number: 17-0748

Type: ordinance **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Approval of Ordinance Amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 9.08 Relating to Interference with a Public Meeting of the City of Olympia

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve on first reading and forward to second reading the Ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 9.08 relating to interference with a public meeting of the City of Olympia.

Report

Issue:

Whether to adopt an ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 9.08 to provide for a new misdemeanor offense related to interference with a public meeting of the City of Olympia.

Staff Contact:

Annaliese Harksen, Deputy City Attorney, Legal Department, 360.753.8003
Rocio Ferguson, Chief Criminal Prosecutor, Legal Department, 360.753.8043

Presenter(s):

Consent Calendar Item

Background and Analysis:

The City of Olympia typically provides an opportunity at each public meeting for members of the public to speak and voice concerns about pertinent issues. In the recent past, City Council and staff have been repeatedly interrupted at City meetings by certain members of the public who have been disruptive by speaking outside of public comment and making unreasonable noise, forcing meetings to adjourn and relocate to rooms that are not open to the public so that City officials can conduct City business. While moving a City meeting due to interruption is certainly allowed pursuant to RCW

42.30.050, it is inconvenient to the public and City Council, as well as to City staff. It also forces the meeting to a space that is not open to the public, which is contrary to the manner in which the Olympia City Council wishes to conduct the business of the City.

The proposed ordinance will allow the City Council and City staff to exclude from certain City locations those who engage in behavior that disrupts City meetings so as to allow those meetings to continue in a limited public forum. Definitions for “City Meeting” and “City Location” have been included in the proposed ordinance to assist with implementation of the new law. *The definition of “Official Detention” is only included here as it must be renumbered to make room for the new definitions. That definition relates to sections 9.08.030, 9.08.050, and 9.08.060 of the Olympia Municipal Code.*

Interference with a City meeting is a misdemeanor offense punishable by up to 90 days in jail and up to a \$1,000 fine.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The community has an interest in being free from disruptive conduct at open public meetings of the City of Olympia.

Options:

1. Adopt the proposed Ordinance amending OMC Chapter 9.08 relating to interference with a public meeting of the City of Olympia
2. Do not adopt the proposed Ordinance
3. Instruct staff to make changes to the proposed Ordinance and bring it back to Council for reconsideration

Financial Impact:

None

Attachments:

Ordinance