



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF TALLAHASSEE

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July 12, 2021

Leon County Board of County Commissioners  
Chair and Members of the Board

**Re: July 13, 2021 Board Meeting, Agenda Item #31: Status Update on the Local Emergency Declaration and Procedures for County Commission Meetings**

Promoting public engagement and participation in local government decision-making are core policies of the League of Women Voters at all levels. We appreciate the care the Leon County Commission has taken to keep our residents safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and recommend, rather than “bouncing back” to the pre-pandemic meeting procedures, “bouncing forward” to an enhanced normal that uses our new knowledge of communications media technology to continue virtual citizen engagement in Commission meetings. We ask that you provide staff this direction under Option #3 of Agenda Item #31.

Your direction under Option #3 will enable staff to further investigate ways and means to support the County’s Strategic Plan - *to be a model for local governance* rather than mimicking other similarly sized counties. As the capital county, Leon County should be setting the Gold Standard for other counties. Direct staff to bring back a new agenda item in the coming months with a proposal for standardized virtual engagement options in Commission meetings before finalizing the 2022 Meeting Schedule.

Furthermore, we encourage the staff to propose a return to at least two Commission meetings monthly rather than continuing the 2020 decision to meet only once per month. There are too many issues before our County to be adequately addressed in only one monthly Commission meeting. Leon County has a relatively high poverty rate and crime index, low percentage of owner-occupied housing, and unemployment nearly double the state average. Yet Leon County residents have one of the highest educational attainment rates statewide and median family incomes above the state average.<sup>1</sup> Addressing these concerns and disparities and enhancing the

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Legislature’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research, [County Profiles](#) (2019-2020 data).

quality of life for all county residents needs a meeting protocol that is both regular and frequent - and facilitates meaningful and diverse civic participation options.

Florida's capital county deserves this heightened level of excellence. Please direct staff under Option #3 accordingly and contact us if we can be of assistance to you or your staff.

Sincerely,



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Local Government Study and Action Group  
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