

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO IMPLEMENT A SIX-MONTH PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE IN-PERSON SPANISH LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION AND SIMULTANEOUS NON-AI SPANISH CLOSED CAPTIONING FOR NORTH LITTLE ROCK CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the City of North Little Rock recognizes the importance of language accessibility in government proceedings to ensure inclusivity and equitable participation for all residents; and

WHEREAS, City Council meetings are critical to the function of our community, where decisions impacting residents, businesses, and public policy are made, and where legal topics often arise that, while not part of direct judicial rulings, would benefit from a professionally qualified interpreter for such business as rezonings, applications, permits, condemnations, and other municipal decisions; and

WHEREAS, more than 7% of North Little Rock's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, equating to nearly 5,000 residents who may face language barriers in accessing and participating in City Council proceedings; and

WHEREAS, providing in-person Spanish language interpretation at all regular City Council meetings will allow non-English-speaking residents to fully engage in civic discourse and understand municipal decision-making processes; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of simultaneous, non-AI-generated Spanish closed captioning for live-streamed and recorded video broadcasts of City Council meetings will further improve language accessibility and transparency; and

WHEREAS, a six-month pilot program will allow the City to assess the feasibility, effectiveness, and costs associated with offering these services on a permanent basis; and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost for the pilot program, including a professionally qualified Spanish interpreter with certifications from accredited interpreting organizations and experience in legal or government settings, and human-generated simultaneous Spanish closed captioning for all City Council meeting broadcasts, is projected to range from \$7,700 to \$11,800 for the six-month period; and

WHEREAS, funding for this initiative shall be allocated from available city resources and reviewed at the conclusion of the pilot program to determine the long-term viability and budgetary impact of continuing these services; and

WHEREAS, the City may need to acquire additional equipment or software to facilitate simultaneous Spanish closed captioning during video broadcasts of City Council meetings, and such purchases shall be authorized as necessary to implement this program effectively.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1: That the Mayor or his designee shall implement a six-month pilot program to provide in-person Spanish interpretation for all regular City Council meetings, ensuring access for Spanish-speaking residents.

SECTION 2: That the Mayor or his designee shall also provide simultaneous, non-AI-generated Spanish closed captioning for the live-streamed and recorded video broadcasts of all City Council meetings during the pilot period.

SECTION 3: That the in-person Spanish interpreter engaged for City Council meetings shall be a professionally qualified interpreter with certifications from accredited interpreting organizations and experience in legal or government settings.

SECTION 4: That the total estimated cost for the pilot program shall not exceed \$15,000, to account for any unanticipated but possible hardware or equipment purchases, with funds appropriated from the City's available budget. If a budget amendment is required to fund this six-month pilot program, it will be presented to the City Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

SECTION 5: That the Mayor or his designee is hereby authorized and directed to acquire and implement any necessary equipment or software to facilitate simultaneous Spanish closed captioning for the video broadcasts of City Council meetings.

SECTION 6: That upon completion of the six-month pilot period, the Mayor's Office, in conjunction with the City Clerk's Office, shall compile a report evaluating usage, effectiveness, costs, and recommendations for the potential continuation or expansion of the program and provide said report to the City Council.

SECTION 7: That the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution.

SECTION 8: That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval.

PASSED:

APPROVED:

Mayor Terry C. Hartwick

SPONSOR:

Nathan Hamilton
Council Member Nathan Hamilton
by AT

ATTEST:

Diane Whitbey, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Amy Beckman Fields
Amy Beckman Fields, City Attorney

PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY/kt

FILED 10:40 A.M.	P.M.
By A. Fields	
DATE 4-8-25	
Diane Whitbey, City Clerk and Collector North Little Rock, Arkansas	
RECEIVED BY S. Osseery	