

Item 8 – Equipping the District with Audio/Visual Capabilities

When District staff began scheduling a court reporter for 2024, scheduling conflicts arose on three separate dates. Upon further inquiry, it became clear that Kennedy Reporting Service can secure more than enough work around Austin to keep them busy. Kennedy has contracts with the State to cover multiple agency hearings. These hearings take precedence over our meetings. It is highly likely that our board meeting(s) could and would be “bumped” if a date conflict with the State occurred.

I visited with Stephen about the issue and suggested the District consider dropping the use of an on-site court reporter and investigate the use of audio-visual equipment to capture the meeting. If a need arose, the audio and video recordings could be transmitted to the court reporter and a transcription created. The video recording allows the transcriber to identify the speaker throughout and prepare an accurate record.

The primary purpose of the audio-visual recordings would be to replace the court reporter while still maintaining the ability preserve the record. A side benefit is to fulfill the desire to broadcast District hearings and meetings to the public via Facebook.

We had Avinext, an audio-visual company in College Station, to perform an onsite visit to determine our needs. The District already has a camera that will work well for video recording. We would need to purchase audio equipment (microphone(s) and audio mixer and have the equipment installed.

If we do away with onsite court reporting, it is proposed to use money budgeted for that purpose to purchase and install the equipment to accomplish our goals. The cost estimate for the work will be \$7,000 - \$8,000. The budgeted line item for court reporting is \$12,000.

It is the recommendation by the General Manager for the District to install audio/visual capabilities in the board member using budgeted funds originally intended for court reporting purposes.