

Guidelines for Public Meetings

1. Zoom meetings with YouTube livestreaming is the approved way of holding Board and Commission Meetings. See Zoom Meeting/ YouTube Live Streaming Policy
2. Boards and Commission Chairs are responsible for appointing someone to monitor their Zoom meeting, and to make sure the meeting is live streaming.
3. At the beginning of each meeting, it is the Chair's responsibility to remind everyone that the meeting is public and to refrain from any conversation that includes an individual's health, job performance, and personal information, or any other inappropriate subjects.
4. If the Chair of a Board or Commission determines that it is not possible to have a full remote meeting, then the following must be followed:
 - a. In person or hybrid meetings must still be held via Zoom and Livestreamed.
 - b. The Chair is responsible for making sure that there is someone at the meeting to set up and monitor the Zoom and Livestreaming.
 - c. The Chair is responsible for making sure that the mask wearing order is enforced. This includes the proper wearing of masks.
 - d. The Chair is responsible for making sure the meeting room is set up properly following social distancing guidelines.
 - e. If there are documents at an in person meeting (maps, applications, etc.), there must be a copy provided for every board/commission member, or the documents must be placed on a separate table where they can be viewed individually with social distancing. Documents must also be available online and/or for pick up prior to the meeting for members not in person.
 - f. If the meeting involves a public hearing, real time access either in person, by phone or via Zoom must be provided to individuals wishing to speak in conjunction with application.
 - g. No more than 10 people can be in the meeting room. If more than 10 people show up, the meeting must be rescheduled.
 - h. If the Chair determines that more than 10 people could show up in person, the Chair may move the meeting to a different location that is appropriate for public meetings. This must be publicly noticed, and points a-f must still be followed.

These guidelines were made considering the following:

- Due to the COVID 19 guidelines, and with input from the Fire Marshal, it has been determined that the Town Hall Meeting room can safely hold no more than 10 people.
- All meetings are public meetings, and no one can be denied attendance.
- All meetings must be held in a way in which people who are high risk for COVID-19 complications, and those who are uncomfortable attending in person, can still attend.
- FOIA requirements must be followed at all meetings.

Approved by BOS 10/13/2020

ZOOM MEETING/ YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM POLICY FOR BOARD AND COMMISSION MEETINGS

1. Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B, signed on 3/14/2020, authorized towns to suspend person to person public meetings, giving us the option to use Zoom for meetings.
2. All board/commission/committee meetings must be open to the public.
 - a. Residents on the agenda receive a zoom meeting invite.
 - b. Residents not on the agenda will be able to view meetings from the town YouTube channel.
 - c. Public comments will be received via email up to at least 1 hour before the scheduled meeting time and will be read during 'public comments' on the agenda.
3. All meeting agendas must have instructions for the public at the top informing them:
 - a. That the meeting will be viewable on YouTube via livestream and will include the YouTube channel name and link.
 - b. That the public will be in view mode only, but they can submit public comments via email provided on the Agenda. If they would like to submit a public comment, it must be emailed at least 1 hour before the scheduled meeting time and it will be read during Public Comments on the Agenda.
 - c. That a recording of the meeting will be available on the website and the YouTube channel 7 days after the meeting.
4. For meetings like P&Z, Inland Wetlands, or others where there are applications, plans, documents and such, all material must be posted on the town website at least 24 hours prior to the meeting for public review. All information from the public must be received at least 24 prior to the meeting to be posted.
5. If the meeting involves a public hearing, real time access either in person, by phone or via Zoom must be provided for individuals wishing to speak in conjunction with application.
6. For those participating via phone, clearly state name and title before speaking.
7. Board/Commission members will receive Zoom meeting log in information via email as soon as the conference call is scheduled. Those without email access will receive the information via text or phone call from the Board/Commission Chair or Secretary.

Example of wording at the top of meeting agendas:

The public will be able to view the meeting live only on YouTube. To submit a public comment, please send an email to (insert town email for board/committee here) at least one hour before the scheduled meeting time. Emails received will be read during the Public Comments or if no Public Comments, the Correspondence, line on the meeting Agenda. This public meeting is being held via Zoom and will be livestreamed on the town YouTube channel which is: Town of Voluntown, CT- Government,
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXdF6kZQMhDVNetgjDX2MAQ>

Approved as a Policy by BOS, 10/13/2020