



Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Policy Title: Electronic Meetings – Municipal Council – During Hybrid In-Person/Electronic Participation at Council Meetings

Division: Municipal Council
Effective Date:
Approval Level: Town Council
Section Number:

Department: Legislative Services
Revision Date:
Policy Number:

Purpose

To set out the guidelines and procedure to be followed to conduct meetings for Council during routine periods where a member of Council or staff or the public (i.e. delegate / presenter) are participating electronically. The authority for conducting electronic meetings can be found in the *Municipal Act* and Town of Cobourg Procedural By-law.

Policy

1. PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Request to Participate Electronically

- 1.1** Members of Council wishing to participate electronically shall notify the Municipal Clerk as soon as possible prior to the meeting, to advise they are intending on participating electronically.
- 1.2** The Municipal Clerk will confirm with the Member that the request has been received.
- 1.3** Members of the public shall view all Council meetings using the Council livestream via the internet.
- 1.4** Delegates or Presenters wishing to participate at a Council meeting will do so electronically and information will be provided at the time they register as a delegation or presenter. See Section 4 for details on logistics for public participation.
- 1.5** Delegations (or public meeting participants) may contact the Municipal Clerk's Department prior to 1:00 PM on the Friday prior to the Council meeting in accordance with the Town's Procedural By-law. The Municipal Clerk will make arrangements to provide videoconference/teleconference information to the delegation to allow them to participate during the meeting.

Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Policy Title:

- 1.6 Delegates or presenters will be sent a Zoom Meeting invitation to join the electronic meeting by clicking the Join Meeting Now link or dialing the telephone number listed in the invitation.

General

- 1.7 The electronic agenda will be posted on the website as per the standard protocol. Livestreaming will continue and archived videos of meetings will continue to be available on the website. Note, livestreaming has a delay of approximately 45 seconds.
- 1.8 The Municipal Clerk, or designate, will forward an electronic invitation to Members of Council several days prior to the meeting.
- 1.9 Prior to the meeting, the Municipal Clerk shall ensure that any members who are participating electronically will receive an electronic version of any presentations or slide shows such that they may follow along during said presentation

2. LOGISTICS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

- 2.1 The Member participating in a meeting by electronic means shall mute their audio when they are not speaking.
- 2.2 The Member will be noted in the minutes as “present via electronic means”.

3. LOGISTICS FOR STAFF

- 3.1 It should be noted that, while there is no requirement under the Procedural Bylaw to require staff to attend, it is the standing practice that Directors, or their delegates, attend. Therefore, staff shall participate electronically, subject to the direction of the CAO.

4. LOGISTICS FOR DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 The Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer shall call upon the delegate or presenter as the item appears in the agenda.

Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Policy Title:

- 4.2** The Municipal Clerk shall then monitor the Participant List in the electronic meeting system. The Participant List will either indicate the person's name.
- 4.3** The Mayor Chair or Presiding shall then recognize the person and grant them the floor. The Chair shall remind the speaker that they have 10 minutes to address Council.

Questions to Delegate or Presenter

- 4.4** The Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer will canvass the Members of their desire to ask any questions of the delegate.
- 4.5** The Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer will ask his/her questions and then thank the delegate.

Leaving the Meeting

- 4.6** At the conclusion of the delegation, the Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer shall advise the delegate or presenter that they will be removed from the Zoom meeting and that they can watch the remainder of the meeting via livestreaming through the municipal website.
- 4.7** In the case of a loss of connection, or any connection issue which impedes the ability of a Member or delegate to participate in the meeting in real time, a short recess shall be called to provide the Member an opportunity to reconnect

5. DURING THE MEETING - OPENING REMARKS

- 5.1** After the meeting has been called to order, the Chair will make the following remarks to all those that are participating:
- Remind those Members on the Zoom Meeting to have their microphone or devices muted unless they are wishing to speak.
 - Explain that the meeting is taking place through Zoom Meetings and that some people may be participating through video while others may be participating with audio only.

Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Policy Title:

- Livestreaming is available at <https://www.cobourg.ca/en/council-meetings.aspx#>

- 5.2** The Municipal Clerk, or designate, will “host” the meeting and shall have the ability to mute Members of Council, staff and any other participants who do not have the floor and/or where the background noise is interfering with the meeting. Members and attendees may also be asked to mute their video (where applicable), at some point during the meeting, in order to improve bandwidth.

Seconding a Motion

- 5.3** As per the Procedural By-law, motions shall be provided in writing but shall not be required to be signed.
- 5.4** A member who is participating electronically, who wishes to move or second a motion, will simply raise their hand, or speak up, as the technology allows and the Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer will ask for them to confirm who they are. For example: Mayor: “Can I have a mover?” Councillor: “I’ll second that Motion.”

Speaking to a Matter

- 5.5** The Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer will canvass the Members participating in a meeting by electronic means about their intention to speak to a matter on the floor and will notify the Member when it is their turn to speak.
- 5.6** Members who are in attendance electronically shall identify verbally if they wish to speak, for example, “It’s Councillor X – I have a question”. Before calling the vote, the Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer will cycle back and ask again if anyone has any comments they wish to make (assuming they haven’t spoken yet.).
- 5.7** The standard rules will apply for speaking a second time to a matter.

Voting on a Matter

- 5.8** After putting a motion to a vote, the Member participating in a meeting by electronic means shall identify verbally and with a show of a hand how they wish to vote.
- 5.9** When a vote is called, the Chair will call the vote as per normal procedure and count the showing of hands. If there is difficulty seeing all hands by Members the vote shall be taken as if it were a recorded vote but will not be recorded as such, unless a recorded vote is actually requested. Note, where the motion is simply procedural (eg. Recess, adjourn, adopt the agenda, etc.), the Mayor,

Corporation of the Town of Cobourg

Policy Title:

Chair or Presiding Officer shall simply call “All those in favour say ‘yes’”, and listen for the responses. Then call “All those opposed say ‘no’ and listen for the responses.

Calling a Recorded Vote

- 5.10** Standard process – and in order of standard assigned seating within the Council Chambers, starting with the Member who requested the Recorded Vote as per the Council procedural By-law.

Leaving the Meeting

- 5.11** A Member participating in a meeting by electronic means shall inform the Mayor, Chair or Presiding Officer about their intentions to leave the meeting either on a temporary or permanent basis.
- 5.12** A Member participating in a meeting by electronic means shall be deemed to have left the meeting when they are no longer electronically connected to the meeting and are unable to reconnect. However, in the case of a loss of connection, or any connection issue which impedes the ability of a Member to participate in the meeting in real time, a short recess shall be called to provide the Member an opportunity to reconnect.

Definitions

Electronic Participation – means participation by Videoconference or other electronic means (audio or audio/video).

Administration

The Council shall implement this policy and shall delegate the Municipal Clerk to administer terms of this policy.

Cross Reference

Municipal Council Procedural By-law 009-2019 as amended.