


ELECTRONIC COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING POLICY		
	DEPARTMENT: Clerk	POLICY NUMBER: 003-20
	EFFECTIVE DATE: May 4, 2020	LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Municipal Act, 2001
	APPROVED BY: RESOLUTION: 2020-139	

Policy Statement

The Township of Wellington North strives to improve the way the municipality communicates and delivers information to residents and other stakeholders, while maintaining transparency and accountability during decision making processes.

Purpose

These procedures have been created to establish guidelines for electronic participation in Council and Committee meetings in accordance with Section 238 (3.3) of the Municipal Act. This policy also outlines the responsibilities of those administrating and attending meetings via telephone or video conference.

Scope

During any period where an emergency in any part of or all of the municipality has been declared by the municipal Head of Council, or the Premier, Cabinet under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act this policy applies to all members of Council and staff participating in a meeting electronically, either via video conference or telephone. Nonetheless, this policy is subject to rules and procedures in the Procedural By-law and/or other provincial legislation.

Definition

“Electronic Participation” means the use of communication technologies including, but not limited to, video, audio or telephone to permit participants to be involved in meetings as defined and in accordance with the Procedural By-law

“Meeting Host” means the person who has scheduled the video meeting and has control over all functions and features in the video meeting.

“Participants” means members of Council, staff, or anyone who is presenting or otherwise participating in a meeting

Electronic Participation

1. Participants shall use their best efforts to connect to the conference via online video or telephone no later than 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.
2. When participating via video conference, Council, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Clerk webcams shall be turned on.
3. When participating via video or telephone conference, all microphones should be muted unless the participant is speaking.
4. Any member of Council participating via video conference should indicate they wish to speak by physically raising their hand and keeping it raised until the chair acknowledges their request.
5. Staff will be invited as a participant to the electronic meeting only if they have a report on the agenda, with the exception of the Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk and Deputy Clerk who shall be at every meeting.
6. Any member of staff wishing to speak, shall turn their webcam on and wait until the Chair addresses them and when finished to turn their webcam off.
7. A member of Council shall announce if they wish to leave a meeting prior to adjournment and their departure will be recorded in the minutes.
8. A member of Council shall announce if they wish to leave the meeting for a personal break and their departure and rejoining the meeting shall be recorded in the minutes.
9. Participants shall ensure the background display is neutral and does not show
 - a. any political messages
 - b. any support for a particular cause
 - c. any profane graphics or words
 - d. any offensive logos or messaging that could be construed to violate any legislation or laws

Voting

10. All votes shall be recorded votes in the case of telephone meeting and a show of hands in video enabled meetings or a combination thereof.
11. A Council member, after declaring a conflict of interest pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of

Interest Act, will leave the video or telephone conference and not participate in any way regarding the matter in question. The Clerk shall notify them once the discussion and vote has taken place so they can rejoin the meeting.

Deputations

12. Individuals wishing to depute to Council shall be invited as a member of the public and will be invited by the meeting host into the meeting at the appropriate time as a participant. At the end of the deputation, the meeting host shall ensure the deputant is no longer attending the meeting as a participant.
13. The meeting host shall show the first and last names of delegates on the video live stream as they appear on the request to depute as submitted to the Clerk.
14. Deputations shall follow all the procedures set out in the Procedure By-law.
15. Participants shall ensure the background display is neutral and does not show
 - e. any political messages
 - f. any support for a particular cause
 - g. any profane graphics or words
 - h. any offensive logos or messaging that could be construed to violate any legislation or laws

Technical Matters

16. Participants are required to use their municipal issued devices, if provided, to ensure proper connectivity.
17. In the event of a connection/service interruption with a member of Council, the meeting shall proceed provided there is quorum. Staff will make reasonable efforts to attempt to assist the member in rejoining the meeting.
18. If a presenter, deputation, applicant, agent wishing to join a meeting as a Participant has technical difficulties in joining the meeting, the matter on which they wish to speak will be recessed for a total of 5 minutes, after which if they are still unable to join the meeting, the matter will proceed as scheduled.
19. All meetings shall be recorded and saved on the township server and may also be uploaded to the Township YouTube account.

Responsibilities

20. Participants shall not share an electronic meetings access information unless directed to do so by the Clerk.
21. When participating in a closed session via telephone, participants shall not use speakerphones.
22. Presenter, deputations, applicants and agents must ensure they have the proper technology to participate in remote meetings.

Meeting Host

23. The meeting host is responsible for administering online video and telephone meetings.
24. The meeting host is responsible for stopping the recording, broadcasting, and/or distribution of audio and/or video prior to the commencement of a closed meeting.
25. The meeting host shall remove any person that does not adhere to clauses 9 a) b) c) d) and 15 a) b) c) d) without warning.

Clerk

26. The Clerk will oversee the number participants to ensure quorum throughout the video or telephone meetings.
27. The Clerk will ensure that all legislative requirements are met, including adherence to the Procedure By-law.
28. The Clerk is authorized to amend this policy from time to time.

Members of Council

29. The Chair shall ensure that all members of Council, have equal opportunity to speak.
30. The Chair shall direct the Clerk and meeting host to silence a participant in a video meeting if the Chair feels they are out of order.