

Town of Yarmouth  
**ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY**

Effective: December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
TOY 57



**1.0 Statement**

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for holding electronic or hybrid meetings for all Council and Committee meetings.

**1.1** A Council or committee member may request to join electronically under the following circumstances:

- a. Away for Council related business;
- b. Health reasons; or
- c. Weather.

**2.0 Requirements**

When a Council or committee member requests to participate virtually, the Clerk shall be notified at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled start time.

**2.1** All participants must have access to the necessary equipment for participation. A right of membership is participation; therefore, the technology used must be accessible to all members to be included in the meeting.

**2.2** All rules pertaining to in-person Council or Committee meetings apply equally to electronic meetings, for example, notice, pre-meeting package requirements, quorum, minute-taking, voting, confidentiality requirements, etc.

**2.3** Whenever possible, participants shall connect to the internet via ethernet cable to ensure the best possible connection.

**2.4** Participants are to login 10 minutes before the scheduled meeting time to resolve any technical issues before the meeting starts.

**2.5** During In Camera sessions, all meeting participants must ensure they maintain complete privacy in their off-site meeting space. This will ensure all discussions are kept confidential and are only heard by those invited to and attending the meeting.

**2.6** All provisions and policy related to in camera meetings and conflict of interest will apply equally for all electronic meetings.

- 2.7** The Recording secretary or other approved administrator shall record the public portion of the meeting for the purpose of minute taking or sharing for public viewing. Non-public meetings will not be recorded.
- 2.8** In no circumstance are discussions in the “chat” function or virtual meeting software to be copied and saved by meeting participants or included as part of the official meeting minutes.
- 2.9** Subject to any conditions or limitations provided for under the Act, Regulations, Bylaws or this Policy, a Council member who participates in a meeting through electronic means shall be deemed to be present at the meeting and will be recorded as in attendance at and part of the quorum of the meeting
- 3.0 Procedure**
- 3.01** The Mayor will be the chair of the Council meeting. For a Committee meeting, the head of the committee will chair.
- 3.02** Any technology employed will enable every participant to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.
- 3.03** Attendance shall be taken and duly recorded to ensure participants are recognized as in attendance.
- 3.04** The Mayor or Chair will ensure that declarations of conflict of interest are heard by all present and that those participating have an opportunity to verbally declare any conflict.
- 3.05** The meeting will be administered in such a way that the rules governing conflict of interest are complied with.
- 3.06** The electronic means will enable appropriate processes to ensure the security and confidentiality of proceedings, both regular and in-camera meetings. This may mean using separate connections and log-ins for scheduled in camera sessions.
- 3.07** Participants will identify themselves before speaking in order to assist the recording secretary in recording the minutes.
- 3.08** Those participating in an electronic meeting shall notify the Chair of their departure (either temporary or permanent) from the meeting, before absenting themselves, in order to ensure a quorum is maintained.
- 3.09** All meeting participants must have a copy of the meeting package including the agenda prior to the meeting for reference during the electronic meeting.
- 3.10** To avoid as much disruption as possible and to support seamless dialogue and debate, all participants will keep their electronic devices on mute unless speaking.

**3.11** Any open chat windows in the technology must be used only to resolve technological problems – it should not be used for side discussions, lobbying other participants or voicing support for motions on the floor. Council members meet and have authority only as a collective with due order.

**4.0 Public Communications**

Persons wishing to provide public communications regarding agenda items shall provide written correspondence to [admin@townofyarmouth.ca](mailto:admin@townofyarmouth.ca) no later than 48 hours before the scheduled start time.

**5.0 Meeting Decorum**

Persons wishing to be audience members need to contact [admin@townofyarmouth.ca](mailto:admin@townofyarmouth.ca) to obtain the meeting ID.

**5.1** Persons with names that violate community standards will not be admitted to the meeting (eg. offensive language).

**5.2** Anyone disrupting the meeting and not following the direction of the Chair will be removed and not permitted back in for the duration of the meeting.

**5.3** Audience members must keep cameras and microphones off unless registered to speak for a public hearing or presentation agenda item. Registered speakers shall only turn on their camera and microphone when invited to speak by the Chair.

**5.4** All participants must be appropriately dressed.

**5.5** All participants to remain stationary and have laptop positioned at desk height.

**5.6** All participants encouraged not to eat during meeting.

<b>Clerk’s Annotation for Official Policy Book</b>	
Date of Adoption: December 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	
I certify that this ‘Electronic Meeting Policy’ was adopted by Council as indicated above.	
Town Clerk:	Date: