

	ELECTRONIC COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS	GOV-07
	CATEGORY: GOVERNANCE	ADOPTED: MAY 6, 2020

Policy Statement

The Township of Chatsworth strives to improve the way the municipality communicates and delivers information to residents and other stakeholders, while maintaining transparency and accountability during all 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) of the Municipal Act. This policy also outlines the responsibilities of those administrating and attending meetings via telephone, video conference or other electronic means.

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, Committees of Council, the public and staff participating in a meeting electronically, either via telephone, video conferencing or other electronic means. Nonetheless, this policy is subject to rules and procedures in the Township of Chatsworth Procedure By-law, as amended from time to time, 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 Procedure By-law.

“Meeting Host” means the person who has scheduled the video meeting and has control over all functions and features in the meeting. For Council and Committee of Adjustment meetings, the host shall be the Clerk or Deputy Clerk, or Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee of Adjustment; for committees of Council, the host shall be the Clerk or his/her designate.

“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 meeting via online video or telephone no later than 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting to ensure connectivity.
2. When participating via video conference, Council and staff 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

requesting. When using “Zoom” video meetings, participants shall click on the “raise hand” button to indicate they wish to speak. Once they have been acknowledged by the Chair, they may unmute their microphone.

5. Staff will be invited to participate in the electronic meeting through the Chair and when delivering a staff report and verbal updates.
6. Any member of staff wishing to speak, shall unmute their microphone and, only when invited to do so by the chair and having clicked on the “raise hand” button.
7. Any 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 a telephone meeting and a show of hands either physically or by clicking on the “raise hand” button in video enables meetings or a combination thereof.
11. A Council member, after declaring a conflict of interest pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, may remain in the meeting, but shall not participate in any way regarding the matter in question. The member must mute their microphone and turn off the webcam until the discussion and/or vote has taken place. The Chair of the meeting will invite the member to turn the microphone and webcam back on once discussion and voting has taken place.

Deputations

12. Individuals wishing to deputate to Council shall be invited as a member of the public and will be invited by the Chair into the meeting at the appropriate time as a participant. The meeting host will ensure the deputant’s microphone and webcam are turned on. At the end of the deputation, the meeting host shall ensure the deputant’s microphone and webcam are turned off.
13. All deputations shall follow all the procedures set out in the Procedure By-law. The meeting host may be called upon by the Chair to assist in this regard.
14. Deputations 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.

Technical matters

15. Council and staff are required to use their municipal issued devices, if provided, to ensure proper connectivity.
16. In the event of a connection/service interruption with a member of Council, the meeting shall proceed provided there is a quorum. Staff will make all reasonable efforts to attempt to assist the member in rejoining the meeting.
17. All meetings shall be recorded and saved on the Township server.

Responsibilities

18. Participants shall not share electronic meeting access information unless directed to do so by the Clerk.
19. When participating in a closed session via telephone, participants shall not use speaker phones.

Meeting Host

20. The meeting host is responsible for administering online video and telephone meetings.
21. When a closed session is taking place, the meeting host shall ensure that all other persons have left the meeting, and only those required to attend may remain.
22. The meeting host is responsible for stopping the recording, and distribution of audio and/or video prior to the commencement of a closed meeting.
23. The meeting host shall remove any person that does not adhere to clauses 9 a, b, c or d; and 14 a, b, c d, without warning at the direction of the Chair.

Clerk, Deputy Clerk or Secretary-Treasurer

24. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk or Secretary-Treasurer will oversee the number of participants to ensure quorum throughout the video or telephone meetings.
25. The persons named above shall also ensure that all legislative requirements are met, including adherence to the Procedure By-law.

Members of Council

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