

VLCT INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT FOR HYBRID (IN-PERSON AND REMOTE) PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public Meeting Informational Handout Town of _____

Remote Hybrid Public Meetings

The selectboard encourages all public bodies for of the town of [*insert name of municipality*] to provide remote access via electronic means to all their meetings. Whenever feasible, the public should, at minimum, be able to access and participate in the remote meetings by dialing in through telephone. Providing remote access does not eliminate the body's obligation under the law to also provide a physical location where members of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. Additionally, at least one member of the body or at least one staff person or other designee must be present at that physical location. Each member that attends electronically must identify themselves when the meeting is convened and must be able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Any voting that occurs at the meeting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2)

Accessing a Meeting

Please refer to each public body's notice and agenda for information on how to access a meeting remotely. Please note that whether you join by telephone, computer, or device, you may be put on hold or in a waiting "room" until granted access to the meeting. You also may be muted or restricted from using any chat function until the public comment portion of the meeting.

Participation

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the respective Rules of Procedure of each public body, to the extent practicable. The public body will follow its agenda and, when feasible, allow members of the public attending remotely to participate through voice (audio) means or alternatively using any chat function during the designated public comment periods on the agenda and at other applicable times as needed. Participation via remote access is not guaranteed, as it is a supplemental method of attending the public body's meeting. To ensure your ability to participate as a member of the public, please attend the meeting at the designated physical location as provided on the meeting's notice and agenda.

Initially, the meeting's host/organizer will mute all remote participants that are not members of the public body. This is necessary to control background noise. The host/organizer will then unmute remote participants or allow participants to unmute themselves when invited to speak by the Chair of the public body.

Please review the following guidelines:

- The Chair will invite comment:
 - during the public comment period as designated on the agenda; and
 - other times as determined by the public body.
- When a remote participant/attendee is unmuted, they must state their name before commenting.

If the public body successfully moves to enter an executive session, the meeting's host/organizer will then place everyone that is not part of the executive session on hold or a virtual waiting "room." This will prevent remote attendees from hearing or participating in the meeting during the duration of the executive session. When the public body exits executive session, the host/organizer will then grant access back to the hybrid meeting.

When the public body adjourns the meeting, the host/organizer will end the electronic meeting by turning off/closing the remote meeting software. Remote attendees will be automatically disconnected.

Minutes and other public records that were part of the meeting will be made available in accordance with VT's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.