

Hybrid Meeting Participation - Pilot

Policy Number: XXX

Topic: Municipal Governance

Applies to: Newmarket Council and Committee Members

Policy Statement and Strategic Plan Linkages

The Town of Newmarket's Council and Committees provide guidance and vision for the matters facing the community. It is essential that members be provided with the opportunity to participate in this process and accommodated when they are unable to attend in-person. Electronic participation gives members the ability to join the meeting from a different physical location, which improves Council's and Committees' inclusivity and representation.

This policy aligns with all of Council's six Strategic Priorities for this term, as Council's decision points at meetings assists in fulfilling these Priorities for the Town. The ability for members to participate electronically enhances the decision making process, improves community involvement through committees and provides accommodation for those members who would otherwise be unable to attend meetings.

Purpose and Applicability

This policy provides guidance to Council and Committee Members on electronic participation during meetings of Council and Committees of the Town of Newmarket, and the necessary framework to ensure consistent administrative practices.

This policy applies to Council and Committees, subject to legislative requirements and governing by-laws. The policy does not apply to internal bodies (e.g., staff committees and staff task forces) or to the public.

Definitions

Note: All defined terms are in bold font with the first letter capitalized.

Advisory Committee means a committee, board, task force or other body constituted and appointed by Council, with the exception of the Newmarket Public Library Board;

Audio-only communication means a type of electronic communication which transmits audio only without picture to the participant, such as teleconferencing;

Audiovisual communication means a type of electronic communication which transmits both audio and video, allowing the participant to both hear and see the other participants, such as online meeting software including Zoom;

CAO means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town or their designate;

Chair means the presiding officer and spokesperson of a Committee;

Clerk means the Director of Legislative Services/Town Clerk or their designate;

Council Meeting means a meeting composed of Council members only, including Council, Committee of the Whole and Site Plan Review Committee;

Electronic Participation means the participation in a meeting of a member who is not physically present in the room but through electronic means such as Audio-only communication, Audiovisual communications, or voice-over-internet-protocol (VOIP);

Hybrid Meeting means a meeting which is held both in-person and through electronic participation, where members may choose to attend through either method.

Quorum means a majority of Members of Council or an Advisory Committee, or as otherwise established in the terms of reference;

Member means a Member of Council or an Advisory Committee;

Town means the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket;

Provisions

1. Participation

1.1 In accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended from time to time:

1.1.1 **Members** participating electronically may count towards **Quorum**; and,

1.1.2 **Members** participating electronically may participate in a meeting that is open or closed to the public.

1.2 All **Members** may participate electronically using **Audio-only communication** or **Audiovisual communication** approved by the **Clerk**.

1.3 If there are members of the public that are physically in attendance at a meeting, they must be able to hear the **Member(s)** who are participating electronically using **Audio-only communication**, or see the **Member(s)** who are participating using **Audiovisual communications**.

- 1.4 Due to special circumstances as decided by the Chair, some **Council Meetings** may be held in-person only, rather than as a **Hybrid Meeting**, without the option for **Electronic Participation**.

2. Technical Requirements

- 2.1 **Members** participating electronically shall be responsible for testing and ensuring the reliability of their connection using **Audio-only communication** or **Audio-visual communication** prior to the start of the meeting.
 - 2.1.1 **Members** participating electronically shall login to the electronic meeting within 30 minutes of the start of the meeting to test connectivity, and audio and visual quality.
- 2.2 If, a **Member** loses connectivity during a meeting for more than 2 minutes, the **Member** will be deemed to have left the meeting, and:
- 2.3 **Members** shall only participate in meetings that are being held in meeting rooms that can accommodate the technical requirements of **Electronic Participation**.

3. Voting

- 3.1 When the **Chair** calls for a vote on a matter, **Members** who are participating using **Audio-only communications**, shall verbally announce their vote by stating “in favour” or “opposed”.
- 3.2 When the **Chair** calls for a vote on a matter, **Members** who are participating using **Audiovisual communications**, shall visually show their vote by raising their hand to show they are either “in favour” or “opposed”.
- 3.3 Recorded vote – treated same for audio and audiovisual – verbal vote when called upon

4. Public Participation

- 4.1 Members of the Public who wish to provide a deputation at a **Council Meeting** may attend in person in the meeting room or through **Electronic Participation** when the meeting is held as a **Hybrid Meeting**.
- 4.2 Members of the Public who wish to attend a **Hybrid Meeting** to observe the meeting without participating may attend in person in the meeting room or through the Town’s electronic video streaming service.

5. Administration and Contact

- 5.1 This Policy shall be administered by the Legislative Services Department. Procedures may be defined, and amended from time to time, by the **Clerk** to address specific implementation of this Policy.
- 5.2 All questions, or concerns with respect to this Policy should be directed to the **Clerk**.

Cross-References

Municipal Act, 2001, as amended from time to time
Town of Newmarket Procedure By-law 2020-12

Contact

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Details

Approved by: Council
Adoption Date:
Policy Effective Date:
Last Revision Date:
Revision No: 000