
Council Virtual Meetings Policy

1. This policy is entitled the “Council Virtual Meetings Policy”.
2. The procedural requirements in this Policy are intended to complement and supplement, and not to replace, the requirements contained in
 - (1) the *Municipal Government Act*; and
 - (2) the Council Proceedings and Committees Policy.
3. In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires,
 - (1) “Council” means the Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester
 - (2) “Council member(s)” include(s) the Mayor;
 - (3) “emergency” means an urgent matter that requires immediate attention or inclement weather that makes it unsafe to meet in-person; and
 - (4) “meeting” means a regular or special meeting of Council or a Council Committee meeting.

Public Notice

4. A Council meeting or Council Committee meeting may be conducted virtually if, at least two days prior to the meeting, notice is given to the public respecting the way in which the meeting is to be conducted;
5. The notice to the public referred to in section 4 must be given by:
 - (1) publication in a newspaper circulating in the municipality;
 - (2) posting on the Municipality of the County of Colchester’s publicly accessible Internet site and in at least five conspicuous places in the municipality; or
 - (3) such other method permitted by regulation.
6. Notwithstanding section 5, where the mayor determines that there is an emergency, a meeting may be conducted virtually without notice or with such notice as is possible in the circumstances.

In-Person Meetings

7. Council meetings and Council Committee meetings require in-person attendance unless otherwise provided in this policy.

All Council members attend virtually

8. For circumstances related to public health or time sensitivity, meetings may be held entirely virtually if each Council member and the Municipality of the County of Colchester have technology available that will:
 - (1) enable the public and/or presenters to see and hear each Council member participate in the meeting virtually;
 - (2) enable each Council member to see and hear every other Council member and presenter participate in the meeting virtually.

One or more Council members attend virtually

9. Subject to the other provisions of this Policy, a Council member may participate in a Council or Council Committee meeting, or part of a meeting, virtually if:
 - (1) two days prior to the meeting, the Council member provides written notice to the CAO indicating that the Council member wishes to attend the meeting virtually;
 - (2) A Council member wishes to attend a meeting virtually due to unsafe road conditions, or a personal or health concern, in which case the requirement to provide notice two days may be waived;
 - (3) the Council member is away on municipal business;
 - (4) the Council member is away on vacation, limited to twice in a 12-month period from November 1 to October 31;
 - (5) the Council member has technology available that will:
 - (a) enable the public to see and hear the Council member participate in the meeting virtually; and
 - (b) enable the Council member to see and hear each of the Council members and presenters who are attending the Council Meeting virtually or in person.
 - (6) the Municipality of the County of Colchester has technology available that will:
 - (a) enable the public to see and hear the Council member participate in the meeting virtually;
 - (b) enable the Council member to see and hear each of the Council members and presenters who are attending the Council Meeting virtually or in person; and
 - (c) enable every Council member who is attending the meeting virtually or in person to see and hear all other Council members and presenters who are attending the meeting virtually or in person.

10. Any Council member participating virtually in a meeting shall be deemed to be:
 - (1) present at those parts of the meeting in which a Council member is permitted to participate virtually under this Policy; and
 - (2) absent for any parts of the meeting in which a Council member is not permitted to participate virtually under this Policy.
11. A Council member may not participate virtually when a secret ballot is required to elect a deputy mayor, alternate chair, and/or committee chair:

Technological problems - failure to connect or disconnection

12. If technological problems prevent a Council member from participating in a meeting prior to the meeting commencing, the Council member shall be marked absent from the meeting.
13. If a Council member becomes disconnected from the meeting due to technical problems or other reasons, or if the Council member is no longer visible on the screen, the minutes shall reflect that the Council member left the meeting at the time of the disconnection or loss of onscreen visibility.

Voting Procedure

14. As per Section 21(1) of the Municipal Government Act, unless otherwise prescribed by statute, a question arising at a council meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes.
15. To determine majority of votes at a meeting held entirely or in part virtually, the Chair may first ask Members of Council opposed to the motion to signify by raising their hands. The Chair will verbally confirm each negative vote, and anyone missed will be added. Members of Council in attendance who are not recorded as opposed following this process will be deemed to have voted and their vote will be considered to be in favour of the motion.
16. Subject to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, all Council members present, including the Chair, shall vote on a question.
17. In the event of a tie in a vote on a question, the question is determined in the negative.

Clerk's Annotation For Official Policy Book	
Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider (7 days minimum):	<u>June 5, 2022</u>
Date of Passage of Current Policy:	<u>June 23, 2022</u>
I certify that this Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.	
<u>Rob Simonds</u> Municipal Clerk	<u>July 7, 2022</u> Dated

*amended June 23, 2022
 amended April 28, 2022
 originally approved March 14, 2022*