

Corporate Policy and Procedure



Policy	Procedures for City Council Participation in Electronic Meetings
Category	Corporate Policy
Authority	City Clerk's Office
Related Policies	Procedural By-law; Code of Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards; Accountability and Transparency Policy; and Access and Privacy Policy.
Approved By	Stephen O'Brien, General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
Effective Date	April 14, 2020
Revision Date	April 14, 2020

Policy Statement

The City of Guelph, guided by its Strategic Plan, aims to improve the way the City communicates and delivers information to residents and other stakeholders, while maintaining transparency and accountability during decision making processes.

Purpose

These procedures have been created to establish guidelines for electronic participation in City Council meetings in accordance with Section 238 (3.3) of the Municipal Act. This policy also outlines the responsibilities of those administrating and attending meetings via telephone or video conference.

Scope

This policy applies to all City staff and members of City Council participating in a meeting electronically, either via video conference or telephone. Nonetheless, this policy is subject to rules and procedures governing City Council as stated in the Procedural By-law and/or other provincial legislation.

Procedures for Electronic Participation in City Council Meetings

Electronic Participation

1. Participants shall connect to the conference via online video or telephone no later than 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.
2. When participating via video conference, 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 City Council or staff participating via video conference should indicate they wish to speak by physically raising their hand and keeping it raised until the chair acknowledges their request.
5. Any member of City Council or staff participating via telephone, shall be called upon by the chair to speak after all members participating in-person or via video conference have spoken.
6. Any member of City Council participating via video conference or telephone shall announce if they wish to leave the meeting prior to adjournment or prior to leaving the meeting for a personal break.
 - a. Such announcement shall be made as stated in Section 5 and 6, as applicable, under the Electronic Participation section of this policy.

Voting

7. All members of City Council participating via video conference will vote by a show of hands.
8. All members of City Council participating via telephone will be asked by the chair to vote verbally.
9. A participant, after declaring a conflict of interest pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, will leave the video or telephone conference and not participate in any way regarding the matter in question.

Delegations

10. City Council may, depending upon the circumstance, waive rules permitting delegations when a meeting has been called under Section 8.1 (d) of the Procedural By-law.
11. First and last names of delegates may be shown on the video conference live stream as they appear on the request to delegate submitted to the City Clerk's Office.

Technical Matters

12. Participants are required to use their City issued devices, if provided, to ensure proper connectivity.

13. In the event of a connection/service interruption with a member of City Council participating electronically in the meeting, the Chair may recess the meeting for up to 15 minutes. After 15 minutes of not connecting the member, the meeting shall resume and no other efforts shall be taken to reconnect the member.

Responsibilities

14. Participants shall not share an electronic meetings access information unless directed to do so by the City Clerk or their appointee.
15. Participants shall use headsets, headphones or earphones, during a video or telephone conference when these have been provided.
 - a. When participating in a closed session via online video conference, all participants shall use headphones.
 - b. When participating in a closed session via telephone conference, all participants shall not use speakerphone.
16. Participants shall provide to the City Clerk's Office, prior to the commencement of the meeting, a phone number to join the conference in the event of a disruption of the video conference.

City Clerk's Office

17. The City Clerk's Office will be responsible for administering online video and telephone conferences.
18. The City Clerk's Office will be responsible for calling those who have submitted a request to delegate.
19. The City Clerk's Office will be responsible for stopping the recording, broadcasting, and/or distribution of audio and/or video prior to the commencement of a closed meeting. A break may be requested by the Chair, City Clerk or appointee to ensure closed meeting confidentiality.
20. The City Clerk's Office will oversee the number of online and in-person participants to ensure quorum throughout the video or telephone conference.

Members of City Council

21. The Chair shall ensure that all members of City Council, regardless of the way they have joined the meeting, have equal opportunity to speak.

City Staff

22. Information Technology staff shall ensure that the video conference is available to members of the public and other stake holders via guelph.ca/live or similar streaming platform.

Definitions

“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 City’s Procedural By-law

“Participants” means members of City Council, staff, the public or anyone who is presenting or otherwise participating in a meeting.

References

Legislative Assembly of Ontario. (2001). “Ontario Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, chapter 25”. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01m25>

Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Municipal Emergency Act, 2020 chapter 4—Bill 187. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S20004>