

CT Budget Implementer Bill Contains Many New Procedures for Remote, Hybrid and In-Person Meetings

Under the new provisions, taking effect on July 1, 2021 and expiring April 30, 2022:

- Meetings can be held either in-person, entirely remotely, or partially remotely (“hybrid”)
- If the meeting is remote or hybrid, the electronic technology must allow members and the public access to meetings through telephonic, video, or other conferencing platforms.
- The pre-COVID FOIA requirements and other rules apply to noticing the meeting, posting the agenda, conducting the meeting and posting votes and minutes after the meeting.
- Agendas must also include instructions for the public on how to attend full or partial remote meetings
- Recordings of fully remote meetings must be posted on the town website within seven (7) days of the meeting. Once posted, it must remain on the website for at least forty-five (45) days. The town must also retain the recording in its office for the same period of time and allow the public to listen, copy or view it.
- Meeting minutes must specify which members attended in person or by electronic means
- The town is not required to adjourn or postpone the meeting if a member loses their connection unless the presence of such member is required to maintain a quorum.
- Members must be notified not less than 48 hours prior to a meeting that is being conducted remote or hybrid
- If any member is participating via electronic means, all votes must be taken by roll call vote, unless the vote is unanimous
- Those speaking during remote or hybrid meetings shall make a good faith effort to state their name and title (if applicable)
- If a hybrid or remote meeting is interrupted, disconnected or otherwise becomes unworkable in the chairman’s discretion, the agency may suspend the meeting. Not less than thirty minutes nor more than two hours following the disconnection or termination, the agency may resume the meeting either (1) in person, if a quorum is present, or (2) by electronic means if a quorum is able to restore their connection.
- In the event of a disruptive person is attending the meeting remotely, the town may remove such person until order is restored
- The general consensus is that the new law does not require remote access to Town Meetings, but it may be provided if the town is able to manage it effectively.

IF YOU PLAN TO HOLD A COMPLETELY REMOTE MEETING, PLEASE BE PREPARED:

- In the event a regular meeting is being held solely by electronic means, if a member of the public makes a written request to the agency not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting, the agency must make available to that member of the public a physical location and the electronic equipment necessary to allow them to attend in real time and the same opportunity to participate and comment, as applicable, if the meeting were held in person.

The town will handle these requests on a case-by-case basis, please note:

- Members of the public can use the zoom rooms in Town Hall; if available, and a staff member must be present. This must be coordinated with Town Hall in advance.
- Members of the public can use the public computers at the library
 - At this time, the library closes at 8:00 p.m. Please note, many meetings run past that time.
 - Library computers allow members of the public to type in the comment section of a zoom meeting, but are not equipped with microphones
 - The library can check out (2) Wi-Fi hotspots for up to a week at a time. The member of the public would still need to provide their own Wi-Fi enabled device. These hotspots are first come, first serve and cannot be guaranteed available when needed
- In the event a meeting is held as a remote meeting, if a quorum of the members is attending by electronic equipment from the same physical location, they must permit members of the public to attend the meeting in person at that physical location.

The new requirements are detailed and may be confusing and are likely to be changed again in less than a year. Please reach out to Town Hall with any questions or concerns. To see a more detailed procedures list [Click HERE](#)