

POLICY AND GUIDELINES  
FOR REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION

Today's technology has provided the ability to provide transparency in the operation of local government with the use of electronic devices and technology such as video teleconference platforms.

Under provisions contained in CGS Section 1-200 which states members can attend a meeting "whether in person or by means of electronic equipment"; the Town Council adopts the following "Policy and Guidelines for Remote Meeting Participation":

It is the Policy of the Town of Ledyard that the Ledyard Town Council and the Town's appointed Committees/Commissions/Boards may conduct all of their in-person meetings in a Hybrid Format enabling both in-person and remote participation, providing the appropriate technology and equipment is available at the physical meeting location. However, this does not preclude meetings from being held remotely when appropriate.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act the following Protocols are required to conduct remote or hybrid meetings:

1. Remote Meetings:  
The public and committee members have the ability to participate, view or listen to each meeting or proceeding either by conference call, videoconference or other technology in real time.
2. Hybrid Meetings:  
Hybrid Meeting provides both in-person and remote participation, for the public, committee/commission/board member and invited guests to be involved in the meeting.
3. Acceptable Means for Remote Participation  
Committee/Commission/Board Members, both elected and appointed, can attend a meeting remotely and may use the following acceptable mediums: telephone, internet, audio or video conferencing, or any other technology means that enables the remote participant and all those present at the meeting to be clearly audible to one another. Remote participation should come from a software platform and device that can provide consistent and persistent signal strength.

The Town shall designate a widely available software platform for Committees/Commissions/Boards to conduct remote meetings.

4. Posting of Notice:

The required notice and agenda for each meeting or proceeding shall be posted on the Town's Website – Meeting Portal, and shall include information about how the meeting will be conducted and how the public can access it.

If a public agency intends to conduct a regular meeting either in part or entirely through remote means, the agency must notify its Members either in writing or through electronic means of that fact not less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. The remote meeting invite would be sufficient notification.

In accordance with CGS 1-225 the Agenda shall be posted no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting as follows:

- (1) At its regular office or place of business;
- (2) In the office of the clerk or district of the political subdivision in which the agency is located, and
- (3) On the agency's website if it has one.

The notice must also include instructions for the public on how to attend and provide comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, either in person or by electronic means, as permitted.

5. Meeting Materials:

Materials relevant to matters on the agenda, including but not limited to materials related to specific applications, if applicable, shall be submitted to the agency a minimum of twenty four (24) hours prior and posted to the agency's website for public inspection prior to, during, and after the meeting, and any exhibits to be submitted by members of the public shall, to the extent feasible, also be submitted to the agency a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting and posted to the agency's website for public inspection prior to, during, and after the meeting.

6. Conducting of Meeting

- (a) All speakers taking part in any such meeting or proceeding shall clearly state their name and title, if applicable, before speaking on each occasion that they speak.
- (b) The meeting host (moderator) should mute and unmute people as needed.
- (c) The meeting host (moderator) shall ask people who are calling in to identify themselves. As an example, the moderator would say "who is calling from 860-464-XXXX?".
- (d) Once callers and video participants are identified, the host (moderator) may ask any participants who have a comment, to please use the "raise your hand" feature in the application for call in.

- (e) Participants may briefly provide comments at the start of each meeting, as specified by the meeting agenda.
- (f) Disruption by Public Participating Electronically - In the event a person or group of person attends a public meeting electronically and interrupts the proceedings or are otherwise preventing the orderly conduct of business, the agency may terminate such person's or persons' electronic access until such time as order is restored. Note that if this occurs, no business which is not on the agenda may be conducted.

7. Remote or Hybrid Participation

(a) Fully Remote Meeting:

The Chairman will serve as the Host (moderator) of the Meeting, unless the Chairman designates another to serve as the Meeting Host (moderator).

(b) Hybrid Meeting:

The Chairman shall be physically at the posted meeting location. In the event they cannot be physically be at the meeting location, they shall designate another member to serve as the Chairman-pro-tem (meeting facilitator).

The Town Council and Town Committees/Commissions/Boards plan to have a quorum present at the physical location the meeting.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman to ensure the proper number of committee members will be physically present at the meeting location. However, if for some reason a quorum cannot physically be at the meeting location, the following minimum number of voting members shall be physically present at the meeting location for the meeting to continue:

Committee Voting Members	Committee Members Physically Required at Hybrid Meeting Location
6 or less	2
7 - 9	3
More than 9	One-third of voting Membership

(c) Changing a Hybrid Meeting to a Fully Remote Meeting:

There may be circumstances in which a scheduled hybrid meeting may need to be changed to a fully remote meeting, such as it was not safe to meet in-person at the designated physical location.

The Hybrid Meeting could be changed to a fully Remote Meeting as follows:


Cancel the "In-Person" portion of the meeting in the same manner as any other meeting would be cancelled.

- ✓ Post a Cancellation in the Town Clerk's Office, on the door of the meeting location, and update the on-line Agenda to state the following:

*"The In-Person Portion of the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting has been Cancelled. The meeting will be held totally Electronically/Remotely", and then again list the link and other remote information on the notice.*

8. Meeting Record:  
The meeting or proceeding shall be recorded or transcribed, and such recording or transcript shall be posted on the agency's website within seven (7) days of the meeting or proceeding and made available within a reasonable time in the agency's office.
9. Quorum  
Remote participants will be able to exercise all their duties for the transaction of business, as set forth in the Town Charter; all remote participation will count toward a quorum. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman to ensure all voting members are properly engaged through both audio and video throughout the meeting.
10. Executive Sessions  
Remote participation at an executive session will be permitted in accordance with the guidelines of this policy. The remote participant must state for the record that they are alone and can not be overheard during the executive session.
11. Effective Date  
The "*Policy and Guidelines for Remote Meeting Participation Policy*" shall become effective upon adoption and supersedes other policies pertaining to this subject.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: March 23, 2022

  
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Kevin J. Dombrowski, Chairman

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Revision: "*Town Council Guidelines – Remote Participation*" Adopted May 9, 2012;  
"*Protocols for Remote Meeting Participation*" Adopted April 8, 2020.

History:

2022: Updated to delete language regarding the Governors Executive Order No.7A, dated March 13, 2020 "*Suspending In-Person Open Meeting Requirements*" that was in response the COVID-19 Pandemic; and added introduction language regarding Hybrid Meeting.

In addition, added language throughout the document pertaining to: (1) Section 4 - Noticing of Remote/Hybrid Meetings; (2) Section 6 paragraph (f) To address public disruption by public attending meeting electronically; (3) Section 7 paragraph (b) Hybrid Meetings.