Remote Only Public Meeting Informational Handout

Town of ______

Remote Only Public Meetings

When a public body holds a remote only meeting the public must be able to access and participate in the remote meetings by dialing in through telephone. While the minimum public access to remote only meetings is via telephone, the public body may use additional software and technology for the public to attend and participate in a meeting, such as Zoom.

Accessing a Meeting

Please refer to each public body’s notice and agenda for information on how to access a meeting remotely. Please note that whether you join by telephone, computer, or device, you may be put on hold or in a waiting “room” until granted access to the meeting. You also may be muted or restricted from using any chat function until the public comment portion of the meeting.

Participation

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the respective Rules of Procedure of each public body, to the extent practicable. The public body will follow its agenda and allow members of the public attending remotely to participate through voice (audio) means or alternatively using any chat function during the designated public comment periods on the agenda and at other applicable times as needed.

Please be aware that technical and other issues may interfere or possibly even prevent the public from participating. Should this happen, the public body will troubleshoot the problem and if needed, adjourn the meeting and continue it to a later time and date.

Initially, the meeting’s host/organizer may mute all remote participants that are not members of the public body. This is necessary to control background noise. The host/organizer will then unmute remote participants or allow participants to unmute themselves when invited to speak by the Chair of the public body.
Please review the following guidelines:

➢ The Chair will invite comment:
  o during the public comment period as designated on the agenda; and
  o other times as determined by the public body.
➢ When a remote participant/attendee is unmuted, they should state their name before commenting.
➢ Remote participants and attendees should verify that their displayed name is accurate when joining a remote meeting.

If the public body successfully moves to enter an executive session, the meeting’s host/organizer will then place everyone that is not part of the executive session on hold or a virtual waiting “room.” This will prevent remote attendees from hearing or participating in the meeting during the duration of the executive session. When the public body exits executive session, the host/organizer will then grant access back to the remote meeting.

When the public body adjourns the meeting, the host/organizer will end the electronic meeting by turning off/closing the remote meeting software. Remote attendees will be automatically disconnected.

All legislative body meetings will be recorded unless unusual circumstances make it impossible to do so. Minutes and other public records that were part of the meeting will be made available in accordance with VT’s Open Meeting and Public Records Laws. Please be aware that, in the event of a staffing shortage due to COVID-19, a public body may extend the time limit for the posting of minutes to not more than 10 days from the date of the meeting.