

# VLCT INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT FOR REMOTE ONLY PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING

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## Remote Only Public Informational Hearing Handout Town of \_\_\_\_\_

### **Public Informational Hearing**

The process for using the Australian ballot system at town meeting requires a public informational hearing as a precursor to the vote. The selectboard must hold an informational hearing when a town uses this system of voting on any public or budget question. Under temporary changes to the law, the hearing may be held entirely remotely. The informational hearing, which is administered by the selectboard, must be held within the 10 days immediately preceding the town meeting at which the Australian ballot system of voting is to be used. The purpose of the informational hearing is to afford the electorate an opportunity to discuss the article(s) on which they will be voting. The hearing serves as the debate component that would otherwise accompany voting when conducted from the floor. The selectboard of the town of *[insert name of municipality]* will offer remote-only access via electronic means to its public informational hearing. The public must, at minimum, be able to access and participate in the remote hearing by dialing in through telephone.

### **Accessing a Meeting**

Please refer to the remote only public informational hearing notice and agenda for information on how to access the hearing 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 hearing. You also may be muted or restricted from using any chat function until the public comment portion of the hearing.

### **Participation**

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the selectboard’s Rules of Procedure, to the extent practicable. The (*selectboard chair/moderator*) will follow the public informational hearing agenda and, when feasible, 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.

While the (*selectboard chair/moderator*) will attempt to provide those attending remotely the same reasonable opportunity to comment, please be aware that technical and other issues may interfere or possibly even prevent that opportunity from occurring.

Initially, the meeting's host/organizer will mute all remote attendees. 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 (*selectboard chair/moderator*).

Please review the following guidelines:

- The (*selectboard chair/moderator*) will invite comment:
  - during the public comment period as designated on the agenda; and
  - other times as determined by the (*selectboard chair/moderator*).
- When a remote participant/attendee is unmuted, they may state their name before commenting but are not required by law to do so.

When the selectboard adjoins the hearing, the host/organizer will end the electronic meeting by turning off/closing the remote meeting software. Remote attendees will be automatically disconnected.

The hearing will be recorded unless unusual circumstances make it impossible to do so. Minutes and other public records that are part of the hearing will be made available in accordance with VT's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.