



Township of Brock Corporate Policy

Policy Name: Electronic Participation

Policy Type: Administration & Personnel

Policy Number:

Reference:

Date Approved:

Date Revised:

Approval By:

Point of Contact: Municipal Clerk/Deputy CAO

1. Policy

- 1.1 In accordance with the Procedural By-law, the Municipal Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, shall establish practices and procedures for electronic participation at meetings.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To outline the rules, policies, and procedures with respect to participating electronically in meetings of Council, Committee of the Whole and Advisory Committees when electronic participation is available.
- 2.2 To ensure that as many aspects as possible for electronic participation mirror those for in-person participation, including the observation of the rules of procedure and participation.
- 2.3 To ensure the transparency of Council and Committee deliberations during Meetings in which participants may be attending electronically.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 "Council Chambers" means the Council Chambers meeting room located at the Municipal Administration Building.

- 3.2 “Device” means the technology used to access the electronic meeting platform, Including, but not limited to mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets, or desktop computers.
- 3.3 “Electronic Meeting Platform” means an application or digital platform used to allow participants to attend a meeting via the internet, including but not limited to, Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
- 3.4 “Electronic Participation” means attending a meeting through an electronic meeting platform.
- 3.5 “Hybrid Meeting” means a meeting at which participants may be attending both in-person or via an electronic meeting platform.
- 3.6 “In-person” means attending a meeting by being physically present in the designated meeting room.
- 3.7 “Participant” means a member of Council, Committee, or a member of the public, or staff who is attending the meeting either electronically or in-person.
- 3.8 “Township” means the Corporation of the Township of Brock.
- 3.9 “Live Streaming” means broadcasting the meeting in real-time via the Township’s website.

4. Background & Preamble

- 4.1 Bill 197 received Royal Assent on July 21, 2020, to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to allow for members of Council who are participating electronically to count towards determining quorum and to participate in closed meetings at all times.
- 4.2 The Township of Brock Council Chambers supports Hybrid Meetings. Members participating in-person use cameras and microphones in the Chambers to be seen and heard by others participating in-person and electronically. Members participating electronically use their device to be seen and heard by Members in the Chambers and connected electronically.
- 4.3 This document is intended to provide clarity on electronic meeting procedures only and is a companion document to the Procedural By-law, the Procedural By-law shall take precedence.
- 4.4 These procedures may be amended from time to time by the Municipal Clerk in with the Chair and will be made available on the Township website and/or included as an appendix to the Procedural By-law.

5. Procedures

Rules

- 5.1 General reminders for electronic participation rules may be verbally outlined by the Clerk or their designate at the beginning of every meeting as required.

Attendance

- 5.2 The Clerk or their designate shall make note of which members are participating in-person and which members are participating electronically during a Hybrid Meeting.
- 5.3 Members must notify the Clerk prior to the meeting of their intent to participate electronically.

Requests to Speak & Communication

- 5.4 Members participating in-person shall indicate a request to speak by raising their hand.
- 5.5 Members participating electronically shall indicate a request to speak by pressing the raise the hand button through the Electronic Meeting Platform.
- 5.6 The 'chat' feature of the Electronic Meeting Platform will be in use for the duration of the meeting, however the Clerk or their designate may disable the chat feature during a meeting at their discretion. Those in attendance will be notified should the 'chat' feature be disabled.

Public Delegations/Presentations

- 5.7 Public delegates and presenters are permitted to participate electronically.

Closed Sessions

- 5.8 Should a meeting go into closed session, members participating electronically who have made a declaration of interest on the matter to be discussed shall disconnect from the meeting and may join again once the closed session item has concluded.
- 5.9 Members participating electronically in a closed session shall ensure the confidentiality of the meeting by taking necessary precautions, including:
- Participating from a private location with no other individuals in the room; and
 - Wearing a headset during the closed session.

Use of Video

- 5.10 Members participating electronically in the meeting shall turn their cameras on during meetings so that they are visible to the Chair and all other meeting participants.
- 5.11 Members participating electronically may “blur” their background to ensure their privacy, if such features are available in the Electronic Meeting Platform.

Motions

- 5.12 Members are encouraged to submit any motions that they wish to make in advance of the meeting via email to clerks@brock.ca, noting the mover and seconder.
- 5.13 Motions will be displayed on the screen to provide accessibility to all participating virtually and in attendance in-person.

Voting

- 5.14 Members participating electronically are expected to vote if they are signed-in to the meeting. If a Member needs to leave the meeting for any reason, they are to sign out of the Electronic Meeting Platform and may re-join at any time. The onus is on the Member to adhere to the Procedural By-law, Municipal Act, and Code of Conduct and vote if they are present at the meeting and not otherwise disqualified from voting.
- 5.15 When a recorded vote is called, Members are to indicate how they wish to vote using the Electronic Meeting Platform.
- 5.16 Members participating electronically who do not vote will be marked as “Absent” if it not possible to determine whether the member is present and not voting. If it can be ascertained with certainty that the member is present and they did not vote, they will be counted as a “No” vote in accordance with the *Municipal Act*.

Service Disruptions

- 5.17 If the Livestream or Electronic Meeting Platform encounters a service disruption during a Hybrid Meeting, then the meeting will recess until service is restored. If service is unable to be restored within thirty (30) minutes, the Chair **may** adjourn the meeting to a later date/time.

Note: Livestreaming is not a legislative requirement and in a situation the livestream fails Clerks staff will push put communications through social media on how to participate in the hybrid meeting.

- 5.18 Members experiencing connectivity issues during a meeting are encouraged to contact clerks@brock.ca for technical support. However, active Hybrid meetings

will not be delayed or recessed for individual members experiencing technical issues during a meeting which are unrelated to a service disruption affecting all participants so long as quorum is still present.

Declared Emergencies

- 5.19 These procedures may be varied as necessary during a declared emergency.
- 5.20 If a declared emergency precludes Council, staff or members of the public from participating in-person, those individuals may be required to participate electronically.

6. References

- 6.1 Township of Brock Procedural By-law
- 6.2 *Municipal Act, 2001*

7. Inquiries

- 7.1 For additional information regarding this policy please contact the Clerks Department at clerks@brock.ca