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**To:** Governance Working Group

**From:** Michael Schulthess, City Clerk  
City Clerk's Office

**Date:** September 25, 2023

**Re:** Draft Electronic Meeting Participation Policy Update

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## **Background**

On August 28, 2023 Governance Working Group passed the following motion:

That the City Clerk BE DIRECTED to undertake the following with respect to the Electronic (Remote) Participation of Members of Council at Council and Standing Committee Meetings

- a) report back to the next Governance Working Group with an additional draft policy that incorporates additional edits, including the following:
  - i) the requirement to have cameras active
  - ii) specific requirements for confidential participation including cameras and headset usage
  - iii) clarification of the expectation for voting Members to attend meetings in person, rather than remote participation; requirement for voting Members to provide advance notice to the City Clerk and Chair of the committee, including reasons for remote participation
  - iv) consideration of a threshold for in person attendance at meetings
  
- b) a draft administrative policy, for the information of Council, with respect to the participation of staff and the public for hybrid meetings.

Attached you will find a draft policy titled "Electronic (Remote) Participation of Members of Council and Standing Committee Meeting" with the changes marked in bold and underlined. A draft administrative policy with respect to the participation of staff and the public for hybrid meetings will follow at a later date.



London  
CANADA

## Electronic (Remote) Participation of Members of Council at Council and Standing Committee Meetings

**Policy Name:** Electronic (Remote) Participation at Council and Standing Committee Meetings

**Legislative History:**

**Last Review Date:**

**Service Area Lead:** City Clerk

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 **It is the expectation for Members of Council or Committee to attend meetings in person, rather than participate remotely.** This policy sets out the parameters for the electronic (remote) participation at Council and Standing Committee meetings, for both open and closed session.
- 1.2 The Council Procedure By-law sets out the parameters for the electronic participation of Elected Officials at Council and Standing Committee meetings during a period of a declared state of emergency.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Closed Session** – shall mean any portion of a Council or Standing Committee meeting that is not open to the public and is held in accordance with Section 239 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- 2.2 **Electronic (Remote) Participation** – shall mean the participation of a Council Member remotely, via electronic means, who shall have the same rights and responsibilities as if the Member was in physical attendance.
- 2.3 **Meeting** – shall mean a regular, special or other meeting of the Council or standing committee and shall include meetings in closed session.
- 2.4 **Member** – shall mean a member of the Council or Standing Committee.

### 3. Applicability

- 3.1 This policy applies to any Member participating remotely.

### 4. The Policy

- 4.3 Council Members

The following shall apply to Electronic (Remote) Participation by a Member:

- a) The meeting Chair shall not be permitted to participate electronically/remotely.
- b) **Members who intend to join remotely must notify the City Clerk and the Chair of the committee in advance, and their notification should include the reasons for their electronic participation.**
- c) Members joining remotely shall connect to the meeting on the required platform and be clearly identifiable with their name.
- d) It is the Member's duty to ensure that their equipment and technology are configured correctly in advance of the meeting.
- e) Members are **required** to have their camera on; it being noted that internet connectivity and bandwidth may influence the ability to keep a camera operational.

- f) Each member is responsible to ensure that there is no background noise at their location that may interfere with the meeting and for muting their device when not speaking.
  - g) Members shall indicate they wish to speak by physically raising their hand (if the camera is on) or by using the virtual 'raise the hand' feature.
  - h) Any Member participating remotely shall leave the virtual meeting if they have a requirement to step away from the meeting prior to adjournment, for a personal break, or if they need to attend to a personal matter. The Member shall rejoin the virtual meeting when they are able to do so. The Clerk shall record attendance for voting purposes.
  - i) All Members participating remotely will vote by using the electronic agenda system or by voice when the electronic agenda system is not being used. All Members of Council are to have their video on during a vote, unless otherwise permitted by the Chair pursuant to this policy.
  - j) During closed session, it is required for all participating Members to have their cameras turned on and use a headset.**
  - k) Where Members may wish to use an alternative background during a meeting, the Member shall use a background that is provided by the City of London, or a blurred background.
- 4.1 The administration of electronic meeting participation shall be at the discretion of the City Clerk, recognizing that technology and requirements will vary from time-to-time. This shall include the means by which Members shall vote.
- 4.2 Meeting record(s) shall reflect which Members and Staff attended electronically and which attended physically.