

Policy No. 1.15
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Meeting Attendance by Audio/Video Conference Policy
April 16, 2019

PURPOSE: To establish a policy allowing for and regulating remote attendance for Town Board, Committee and Commission members who are not physically present at meetings, so they may participate in the decision process for matters of high importance to the Town. Town Board, Committee and Commission members are strongly encouraged to physically attend meetings whenever possible.

POLICY: The Town of Rome Board of Supervisors, by adopting this policy, authorizes individuals serving on its appointed and elected Boards, Committees and Commissions that are subject to Open Meetings Law to participate remotely at meetings for reasons where participation by physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult, including personal illness, personal disability, emergency and geographic distance.

The remote participation policy is subject to the following restrictions:

1. Members participating by audio or video conference shall not be the presiding officer of the meeting.
2. A quorum, not including any remote participant(s), must be physically present for remote participation to occur.
3. The acceptable means of remote participation is: conference, telephone, internet audio or video conferencing, or any other technology available that enables the remote participant and all persons present to be clearly audible to one another.
4. Remote participation may only be used for Town Board/Committee/Commission meetings. Remote participation will not be used for any portion of these meetings that are Quasi-Judicial.
5. All Board/Committee/Commission members will be subject to a limit of two (2) meetings per year in which remote participation is accepted for attendance. Any meeting in which a member utilizes the remote participation policy, whether attended in whole or in part via remote participation, will count toward the two (2)-meeting-per-year limit. Additional remote participation at meetings beyond the two (2)-meeting-per-year limit shall require approval by the Town Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis.

PROCEDURE:

1. A Member must notify the Town Clerk/Treasurer, not less than three (3) business days prior to the meeting, to allow for necessary set-up.
2. Audio conferencing devices shall be placed in the meeting room in a way that allows members not physically present to hear and be heard by all those who are physically present including all individuals of the public present and by those listening on TV.
3. At the start of the meeting, the Chair shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely. Such information must also be recorded in the meeting minutes. The Chair's statement does not need to contain any detail about the reason for the member's remote participation.

4. Members of public bodies who participate remotely may participate in deliberation and vote. All votes taken during a meeting in which a member participates remotely must be by roll call vote.
5. If technical difficulties arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, the person chairing the meeting may decide how to address the situation. Public bodies are encouraged, whenever possible, to suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If a remote participant is disconnected from the meeting, the minutes should note that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred.