

Draft dated 5/23/2022; Updated 5/25/2022
Resolution

A resolution of the Missoula City Council establishing procedures and parameters for hybrid public board and commission meetings.

Whereas, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Missoula switched from holding board and commission public meetings from in person to all virtual public meetings to continue conducting business; and

Whereas, virtual meetings provided the ability for the public and meeting body members to attend and participate in meetings without having to physically attend a meeting location; and

Whereas, as board and commission meetings return to being conducted in person, the City desires to consider offering virtual as well as in person options for citizen participation, and for board and commission members to attend virtually under limited circumstances (hybrid public meetings); and

Whereas, Missoula City Council recently established procedures and parameters for conduct of hybrid City Council and committee meetings in their City Council rules and desires to set the same parameters for City board and commission hybrid meetings; and

Whereas, there may be times when a board or commission's business requires that it conduct a meeting in a location that does not have equipment to enable hybrid meetings (i.e. field trips, strategic planning sessions, etc.); and

Now therefore be it resolved the Missoula City Council establishes the following procedures and parameters for the conduct of City board and commission meetings and attendance and participation by appointed board and commission meeting body members:

Remote Participation by Meeting Body Members in Meetings

In person participation by appointed board and commission members is expected whenever possible. Some circumstances (e.g. pandemic/public safety emergency, emergencies, construction, etc.) may dictate that a board or commission may need to hold virtual meetings.

If a board or commission member is facing circumstances in their life (illness, family and parental leave, unexpected work travel, etc.) or other barriers making it difficult to attend meetings in person they may submit a request via e-mail to the meeting body members to participate remotely for a finite period of time to continue to fulfill their duties as an appointed board member during the described circumstances. The request to participate remotely is approved unless a majority of meeting body members object within three calendar days of the request being sent.

Meeting body members participating remotely are considered to be taking part in the meeting as though they were physically present at the meeting and shall attend via an audio/video connection. If the meeting body member is having technical difficulties staying connected to the meeting and participating, they may attend and participate via audio connection only. Remote meeting body members connected via audio/video or audio only are counted in determining a quorum and are eligible to vote on all business presented during the meeting. If a meeting body member does not have an audio or audio/video connection to a meeting, they shall be considered absent and are not eligible to vote.

Meeting Procedures when Meeting Body Members are Participating Remotely

1. A quorum shall be established through a roll call.
2. Members shall either be recognized by name by the chair before speaking or shall state their names prior to speaking if the chair does not call on them by name.
3. Prior to voting on a question, the chair shall clearly summarize the pending motion.
4. Votes shall be taken by roll call or unanimous consent.

Remote Participation by Interested Parties

Public participation in board and commission meetings is invited and encouraged. Meeting agendas shall indicate the meeting's time, date, and place (either virtual hosting software and/or a physical location if the meeting is being held in person or hybrid). Public participation technology shall allow for simultaneous, interactive communication that enables remote participants and all person present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another. Acceptable means of public participation during a virtual meeting are via an audio connection to the meeting. Links to join the meeting, phone numbers (including a toll-free or local dial option for landline phones to avoid long distance charges) and a staff phone number for any technical issues associated with virtual participation shall be posted on the meeting agenda. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair will announce how remote participants can raise their hands to be recognized when the chair calls for public comment on an agenda item. When calling for public comment, the chair will recognize in person attendees first and then virtual attendees.

Be it further resolved that City board and commission meetings are expected to primarily be conducted as hybrid meetings and in a manner to allow virtual participation whenever possible allowing for exceptions only when the meeting body's official business necessitates holding the meeting in a location that isn't sufficiently equipped to offer hybrid meetings.

Be it further resolved that these parameters and procedures do not apply to neighborhood and Community Forum meetings.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2022.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Martha L. Rehbein
City Clerk

John Engen
Mayor