Virtual meeting resources for public meetings

On Wednesday, March 18, Gov. Whitmer issued Executive Order 2020-15, temporarily changing the Open Meetings Act to allow public bodies—including the township board, zoning board of appeals, planning commission and others—to conduct their meetings electronically, while also facilitating public participation. Certain procedures must be followed to ensure meaningful access and participation by members of the public body and the general public. In addition to our “MTA Guidelines for Conducting Meetings under Executive Order 2020-15 and the Open Meetings Act”, the following are some common teleconference service companies, along with tips and suggestions as townships consider this new option for public meetings.

Conference call services:
- RingCentral—www.ringcentral.com
- UberConference—www.uberconference.com
- FreeConferenceCall.com—www.freeconferencecall.com
- Vast Conference—www.conferencecalling.com

Steps to setting up a virtual meeting via conference call:
1. Select your conference call service provider and create an account.
2. Select appropriate dial-in numbers for your callers.
3. Pick a date and time for your meeting via conference call—and invite your fellow board members and the public to participate.
4. All participants dial into your conference at the appointed time.
5. Commence your meeting.

Video conferencing services:
(note that several of these companies offer conference call services as well)
- GoToMeeting—https://www.gotomeeting.com
  (Also has conference call capabilities)
  (Also has conference call capabilities)
- Zoom—https://zoom.us/
- WebEx—https://www.webex.com/
  (Also has conference call capabilities)
- Facebook Live—www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/solutions/facebook-live
**Tips for successful virtual public meetings:**

- Do speak clearly
- Do maintain eye contact by looking into the camera
- Don’t interrupt other speakers
- Don’t carry on side conversations
- Don’t communicate with other members of the public body by text or email while in the virtual public meeting

**Remember:** These are official township meetings and must be conducted accordingly. The Open Meetings Act must still be followed. Please note that **townships may continue to hold in-person meetings**, as long attendance does not exceed the Governor’s current prohibition on assemblages of 50 people in attendance.

**Ask for help**
Check with your township’s IT consultant for options that may work best in your community. The following MTA vendors are also able to assist townships with questions:

**Aunalytics**
6395 Technology Ave., Ste. A  Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
(800) 875-4222 | mason.everett@aunalytics.com  
www.aunalytics.com/

**Shumaker Technology Group**
3721 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 103  Lansing, MI 48917  
(517) 388-3120 | kyle@shumakergroup.com  
www.shumakergroup.com