Virtual Meeting Report
from U of M COVID-19 Consulting Corps and MTA collaboration
I. Executive Summary

Many townships are currently hosting public meetings virtually in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order 129, which is currently in effect until July 31 but may be extended. Other townships are holding them in-person while social distancing and wearing masks. Beyond July 2020, the MTA should consider how to support or not support this meeting format newly available to townships. In response, the MTA could do nothing, fully support and lobby for virtual meetings as an option, or take a middle path. Doing nothing would result in reverting back to the status quo of in-person meetings, which would appease nearly half of its constituents. Lobbying for the permanent option to host virtual meetings would appease just over a third of MTA’s constituents. The middle option would appease some of each of these factions while still considering the broadband access barriers that many townships experience. In addition, the MTA and/or State of Michigan should support townships in their efforts to conduct virtual meetings. The MTA should provide training on how to host and participate in virtual meetings, host and help maintain township websites, clarify what aspects of public meetings can be virtual, and consider bulk purchasing hardware and software. Last, as townships pursue hosting virtual open meetings, the MTA should consider equitable access to them for all Michigan residents, including the barrier of broadband access in more rural Michigan locations.

II. Policy Options

MTA’s membership is divided over virtual meetings. The recent survey MTA conducted about township leaders’ attitudes toward virtual meetings during the pandemic revealed that 48% of respondents oppose the option of virtual meetings while 52% support it. Even those who support virtual meetings are divided - 40% believe they should only be a near-term option, while 36% believe they should be a permanent option. Given these divisions, MTA can consider three policy approaches: 1) maintain the status quo, 2) lobby to change the Open Meetings Act (OMA) to allow virtual meetings permanently, or 3) lobby for additional emergency autonomy for townships, and to change the OMA to allow hybrid meetings.

Policy Option 1: Maintain status quo to satisfy half of MTA constituency, but offer guidance to townships meeting virtually

The 48% of surveyed township leaders who opposed the option of virtual meetings cited several main concerns:

- **Broadband access** - some townships, particularly small rural ones, do not have the internet access required for all residents to reliably access online meetings
- **Potential exclusion** - residents, and members of public bodies, who are not tech-savvy and/or do not have the necessary devices or internet service to access virtual meetings may be excluded
- **Reduced transparency** - virtual meetings can be less structured than in-person meetings. Members of public bodies could use chat features when available to hold private side conversations, which has raised transparency concerns.
- **Interpersonal interactions** - virtual meetings can suffer lack of interpersonal interaction, including body language
● **Residency concerns** - virtual meetings allow residents and interested parties who are not geographically close to attend meetings; this includes “snowbirds” who are sometimes perceived as less invested in the community. Virtual meetings could encourage people who don’t spend significant time in the township to wield excise power.

● **Cybersecurity concerns** - virtual meetings, including closed sessions, are at risk of being hacked (e.g., “Zoom-bombed”)

The MTA may decide that these concerns are serious enough that it should not press the issue of allowing virtual meetings beyond when the governor deems them necessary for the acute periods of the current crisis. Note, however, that since virtual meetings would be an option rather than a requirement, townships that opt out of virtual meetings would not face the consequences of the above concerns. If the MTA chooses this approach, it should support the roughly half of townships that support virtual meetings at some level offering guidance on how to successfully meet virtually while complying with the OMA and relevant Executive Orders.

**Policy Option 2: Lobby for changes to OMA to allow virtual meetings permanently**

The 52% of surveyed township leaders who favor virtual meetings cited four main benefits:

● **Public health & safety** - townships can continue necessary business without putting the health & safety of the public and members of public bodies at risk, both during the current pandemic and in other emergency situations

● **Convenience** - virtual meetings allow participants to join from their homes or while on vacation, saving all participants travel time and allowing the township to conduct business, even if there is not an in-person quorum

● **Accessibility** - constituents who may have been unable to attend in-person meetings for a variety of reasons (health, childcare, work, etc.) may find it easier to participate in virtual meetings

● **Public body recruiting** - potential members of public bodies who could not commit to attending every meeting in person may be able to commit to attending virtually; thus, while “snowbird” residents were previously ineligible, they would be under this option

For these reasons, the MTA may decide that lobbying the governor’s office and the state legislature to make virtual meetings a permanent option is the appropriate path. While the benefits may not outweigh the downsides for townships that do not favor virtual meetings or are ill-equipped to conduct them, these townships would not be required to hold virtual meetings. Permanently allowing virtual meetings gives all townships the flexibility to choose the best meeting type for them.

**Policy Option 3: Lobby for additional emergency autonomy and changes to OMA to allow hybrid meetings**

There is a middle path the MTA could consider to address some of the challenges that have emerged with the OMA’s in-person requirements without replacing them completely.

1. **Lobby for formal emergency autonomy for townships.** Many townships reported having to hold meetings during the pandemic in order to cancel or change their regular meeting schedules
and/or to approve regular payables. Some of those meetings were held in person, risking public health. During emergencies that make in-person meetings dangerous, like disease outbreaks or extreme weather events, township leaders want the explicit power through the OMA and other relevant legislation to:
- cancel or reschedule meetings as needed to protect public safety
- approve regular payables without holding an in-person meeting
- hold all-virtual meetings to conduct necessary business

To alleviate concerns about these emergency powers being abused, allowing townships to exercise these powers could be formally tied to declarations of emergency by the governor.

2. **Lobby for changes to the OMA to permanently allow hybrid in-person/virtual meetings.**

Some townships already interpret the OMA to allow one or more members of a public body to participate virtually as long as a quorum of the public body is present in person. If the OMA were revised to formalize this interpretation, similar to how military members can already attend virtually, members of public bodies would benefit from increased flexibility and convenience. Additionally, if the OMA were revised to explicitly allow the public to participate virtually as well, the accessibility benefits of virtual meetings would extend beyond emergency situations. Residents who are more technologically savvy, who value convenience, who are immune-compromised, who are in ill physical health, or who are out of town at the scheduled meeting time will more likely attend virtually but all would still have the option to attend in-person. Even those townships that expressed opposition to a virtual-meeting option or “did not see the need,” may find value in allowing virtual public attendance in the form of easier social distancing, and increased public participation.

Pursuing these specific policy changes could be a “best of both worlds” approach for the MTA, addressing some of the urgent needs revealed by the current pandemic while recognizing the value of in-person open meetings.

III. **How to Support Townships holding Virtual Meetings:**

Regardless of the policy approach the MTA takes toward virtual meetings, it will still be committed to supporting townships that hold virtual meetings, during this crisis and beyond. According to MTA OMA survey data, in general, townships need support in four areas:

1. **Purchase software and hardware**
   - Bulk purchasing software would improve software’s value while reducing costs
   - Bulk purchasing hardware could reduce cost burden on individual townships

2. **Provide training on hosting and participating in virtual meetings**
   - Training would increase virtual meeting adoption by interested townships and residents

3. **Host township websites and support townships with website maintenance**
   - Reduces burden on townships to build and maintain their own website, leading to increased public notice, awareness, and participation
1. **Purchase software and hardware**
   First, township officials requested help with purchasing the necessary software and hardware for virtual meetings as a way to pool resources and thus reduce costs. The benefits to purchasing such a service would include allowing meetings to last longer than 40 minutes, which is otherwise the maximum meeting length for the free version of Zoom, as well as additional features (further outlined in the software requirements deliverable). Of course, you would need to consider that several townships would not make use of the service, either because their township does not have sufficient broadband service or because the elected officials opt out of virtual meetings.

   In addition, respondents requested help with purchasing hardware, including computers, microphones, and monitors. Township officials would use computers if they did not already have their own on which to conduct virtual meetings. In-person attendees would use microphones to ensure quality sound for the virtual audience. In-person attendees without their own laptops would use a monitor to see the virtual attendees. If townships could agree on exactly what equipment they would each need, the MTA or the state could add value by collectively purchasing such equipment.

2. **Provide training on hosting and participating in virtual meetings**
   Respondents asked for the MTA to provide training on how to conduct and participate in a virtual open meeting. Of course, many officials and residents are not native technology users. Marquette township clerk Lyn Durant said in an interview that the MTA should provide training in many delivery formats when possible (e.g., recorded video, documentation, virtual live session) to accommodate different learning styles.

3. **Host township websites and support townships with website maintenance**
Townships want support with website hosting and maintenance so that there is a central and systematic way of posting open meeting notice. Not all townships have staff with the available time or technological know-how to create and maintain a website. The MTA or the State of Michigan should provide townships with website hosting support.

IV. Equitable access to virtual meetings and broadband access

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have limited profit potential in rural areas and thus are not incentivized to build infrastructure without government funds. The MTA’s government relations team has previously lobbied the state and federal government for funding to support rural-area broadband infrastructure.

Regions with very limited internet access

Internet access was cited as a problem by 49 townships (10% of respondents) that responded to a UM Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) question about virtual open meetings during the pandemic. The survey identifies townships by region and size, but not by name. Townships reported internet issues in every region, though they were slightly more concentrated in the Northern Lower Peninsula, West Central Lower Peninsula, and Upper Peninsula. Almost all of the internet access issues were reported by townships with fewer than 5,000 residents.

According to the UM CCC survey administered by MTA, 37 townships (13% of respondents) reported that they did not hold or attempt to hold a virtual open meeting due to lack of internet access in their township. Twenty of the 37 respondents identified their township’s name in their survey response, and these 20 are listed in the below table. As expected, nearly all of these 20 townships have small populations, specifically under 5,000 residents. The fourth column in the table describes whether any blockgroups (small geographic regions) in the township for that row are eligible for FCC funds according to this [FCC Auction 904 map](https://www.fcc.gov/auction/results). The map is a proxy for areas designated as broadband deficient. Those rows highlighted in green describe a township that is internet deficient according to the FCC and either wants the option to host virtual meetings, or does not want the option but cited lack of internet or equipment as reasons why they don’t want the option.

If the MTA seeks federal funds for broadband infrastructure, it should prioritize obtaining funds for the townships highlighted in green, as these townships are most likely to pursue and benefit from virtual meetings. Of course, there are additional townships that responded that internet access was a barrier to hosting virtual meetings, but did not supply their township names in the survey. MTA should also keep in mind the MPPS survey data that indicated small townships, particularly in the Northern Lower Peninsula, West Central Lower Peninsula, and Upper Peninsula, are struggling the most with limited internet access. Additional resources on broadband access are included in the appendix.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Does township want option to host virtual meetings in future?</th>
<th>Township includes broadband deficient blockgroups designated by FCC</th>
<th>Reason why township wants/does not want virtual meetings in future</th>
<th>Township Size</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>Branch</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>Branch</td>
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<td>Don't see need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clam Union</td>
<td>Missaukee</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Menominee</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>&lt;1500</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Isabella</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>&lt;1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodland</td>
<td>Lapeer</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>1500 - 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>VanBuren</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Don't see need</td>
<td>1500 - 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanover Township</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Internet &amp; Tech literacy</td>
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<td>Leroy</td>
<td>Osceola</td>
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<td>Mancelona</td>
<td>Antrim</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>1500-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Allegan</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Internet &amp; Tech literacy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ogemaw</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Don't see need</td>
<td>&lt;1500</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kalkaska</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1500-5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waucedah</td>
<td>Dickinson</td>
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<td>&lt;1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilmot</td>
<td>Cheboygan</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Prefer in-person &amp; unclear regulations / rules</td>
<td>&lt;1500</td>
</tr>
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<td>Washtenaw</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

Green lines are townships that could be prioritized when advocating for broadband funding. These green-highlighted townships are broadband deficient, and either want virtual meetings or that the township only doesn’t want virtual meetings because the township lacks internet or equipment, two surmountable issues. Purple cells indicate a response that does not warrant prioritizing the area for broadband infrastructure funds. Grey cells are attributes that would lead MTA to prioritize lobbying for broadband funds for that township.

Equitable access concerns

Allowing townships to host virtual meetings while broadband remains inaccessible to several townships has the potential to leave these townships further behind, widening the gap between suburban and rural townships. To mitigate this risk, there are two main actions that these townships can pursue.

A short-term option is for limited-access areas to host virtual meetings via conference calls on platforms such as FreeConferenceCall.com. More information on this option is included in the Software.
Requirements deliverable. In addition, all townships, and especially those with limited broadband or where inclement weather is common, deserve the autonomy to cancel and reschedule meetings under short notice during emergencies. Virtual meetings could also benefit underprivileged township residents, granting them greater access to public meeting participation despite their limited access to transportation, health status, etc.

V. Conclusion

The evidence presented suggests that policy option #3 will most holistically address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and existing OMA requirements. These actions take a middle-of-the-road path for a constituency that is divided in their support for virtual meetings while not disrupting any townships’ existing procedures should they not wish to adapt. Further, we recommend that MTA take all steps outlined in the section “How to Support Townships Holding Virtual Meetings.” Many townships have no choice but to hold virtual meetings in the immediate future, especially as the pandemic remains unresolved. So, townships deserve direction and guidance from the MTA in the form of bulk-purchasing software, providing training on open-meeting facilitation, and support with website maintenance. Last, the MTA should recognize that this pandemic and any forthcoming crises requiring townships to meet virtually is likely to exacerbate inequities between those townships with and without broadband access and cellular service coverage. As such, the MTA should actively seek and lobby for opportunities for funding of broadband infrastructure for these areas but also provide short-term options for these areas to hold virtual open meetings.

Appendix

Broadband access advocacy groups and resources

For reference, below is a list of broadband access organizations and resources.

- **The Center for Rural Strategies** is a national coalition working to create better broadband access for rural America. The group petitions to the Federal Communications Commission, Congress, and individual state representatives against policies that place rural communities at a disadvantage.
- **Broadband Connects America** is a coalition that advocates for affordable broadband and connectivity in rural America.
- **Broadband Availability Maps** by Connected Nation Michigan works with Michigan’s broadband providers to produce broadband access maps for public use. Their most recent maps and statistics were released in June 2018 and the next ones will be published in September 2020. Broadband providers submit their data or ask questions of the group through this [MPSC page](#).
- **Pew Research Center** collects and charts national data on internet/broadband access and usage by age, race, gender, community type, etc.
- **FCC’s Fixed Broadband Deployment maps** show broadband access by geography.
- Crisis-Response Initiative’s [Webinar "The Crisis-Ready Digital Experience" scheduled for Aug 26](#) will discuss government resiliency strategies with digital services.
Virtual Meeting Reference Guide for Townships
(EO 2020-129)

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Introduction

Virtual meetings are meetings held via phone or videoconference. Holding virtual public meetings while complying with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as well as current Executive Orders regarding open meetings during the pandemic, is a complex challenge.

Many townships have already held virtual open meetings in order to conduct necessary business during this crisis. Through surveys and interviews, hundreds of townships shared their virtual meeting successes and struggles with the MTA. This guide draws from these townships’ “lessons learned” to provide best practices for holding successful virtual open meetings that follow the current legal requirements.

Why hold a virtual meeting?

**Public health**: Virtual meetings are essential tools for conducting necessary business while maintaining social distance to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Military service absence**: Members of public bodies who cannot attend meetings in person due to military service can attend meetings virtually.
Holding a Phone-only Meeting

Why choose a phone-only meeting?

- Phone conferencing allows townships to hold public meetings that meet the two-way communication requirements of the OMA and EO 2020-129 with the fewest technical barriers.
- If your township or a significant portion of its residents has limited broadband internet access, you may prefer to conduct meetings using phone-only platforms.

Case study: DeWitt Charter Township

At the beginning of the pandemic, DeWitt Charter Township used a hybrid socially distanced, in-person public meeting format combined with a virtual attendance option. However, an agenda topic that generated a lot of interest made the in-person option too risky, by potentially violating either the Executive Order with high attendance, or Open Meetings Act by turning away the public. Consequently, DeWitt shifted to all-virtual public meetings. They were deterred from using video-conferencing because they had heard stories of Zoom-bombing and their members have differing technical ability levels. So, they decided on phone-only meetings.

DeWitt uses FreeConferenceCall.com to host meetings, so each participant just needs a landline or cellular phone. Additionally, the meeting host, the township clerk, can use a laptop to manage the meeting online. As the host, the clerk can monitor who is on the conference call and mute and unmute participants to reduce background noise. Participants are instructed to join the call between 5-15 minutes before the official start time. The clerk calls roll and announces membership and guests.

During the meeting, the chairperson facilitates the agenda. All votes are by roll call vote. Requests to speak by guests during the meeting are not permitted until the designated comment periods. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. As with in-person meetings, there is a structured manner in which business on the agenda is addressed: The chair presents the member or guest who will present an item of business. After it is presented, the chair facilitates roundtable member discussion, amendments are considered, and a motion and a second are entertained. The public is then invited to give comment by dialing 5* on their keypad.

I. Preparing for the meeting

Conference service

- Choose a conference call service that provides the features you need and fits your budget.
- FreeConferenceCall.com is a popular free/pay-what-you-can service with helpful features including muting, recording, and an online dashboard to manage calls and recordings.
- Zoom’s Pro Plan is $14.99 per month and offers an audio-only conferencing option. However, the host/moderator should have computer access to facilitate the meeting. The Zoom Pro Plan also includes the following features: muting, recording, hand raising, and an online dashboard to manage calls and recordings.

**Technical requirements & equipment**
- Each participant needs a mobile or landline phone to participate.
- Headsets with microphones, earpieces, and conference phones are useful additional hardware.

**Facilitation**
- As with in-person meetings, virtual meetings run more smoothly when a designated facilitator, such as the township clerk or an administrative staff person, helps the person who is running the meeting. The facilitator can act as the conference call “host.”
- In addition to the recordkeeping and meeting management that a facilitator would normally provide, the facilitator should become familiar with the conference call service so that they can help address technical issues as needed.

**Security**
- Check the phone conferencing system’s terms of service to make sure that calls are not automatically recorded or used for any purpose without your permission.
- Most conference call services have a “call count” feature that will tell you how many people are on the call (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can get a call count by dialing *2).
- Some services will send the host a report after the call of who was on the call and for how long.
- Some services will also allow you to see and manage participants via an online dashboard during the call.

I. During the meeting

**Minutes/recordkeeping**
- Most conference services can record calls (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can record by dialing *9). This may be a good option if you don’t have a facilitator available to take minutes during the meeting.

**Public participation**
The Open Meetings Act does not allow public bodies to require that participants identify themselves in order to participate in an open meeting. However, public bodies are allowed to make reasonable rules about when participants are allowed to comment in order to minimize disruptions.

Most conference services have a feature that allows the host to mute and unmute all participants (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can mute and unmute participants by dialing *5). This can help minimize disruptions if too many people are speaking at once or if there is a disruptive caller.

Participants can unmute themselves when it is their turn to comment (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can mute and unmute yourself by dialing *6).

If participants send written comments, they should be read out loud during the meeting to satisfy the requirement that comments must be heard by all meeting attendees.

**Board/Commission member participation/communication**

- Members of the public body should be careful not to deliberate or make decisions via private electronic communications, including text, email, and chat, outside of or during public meetings.
- Roll call votes are the clearest way to make decisions during a conference call meeting.

**Closed sessions**

- Members of a public body, and other required attendees like the supervisor or attorneys, can leave the public meeting conference call and join a separate conference call to conduct a closed session.
- Some conference services allow you to lock a conference call to prevent other attendees from joining (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can lock a call by dialing *7). This feature should only be used for closed sessions.
- Once the closed session has concluded, members of the public body must return to the public meeting conference call to make decisions or conduct any further business, even if it is only to adjourn the meeting.

**Glitches/WFH distractions**

- Be honest and open with your constituents. Acknowledge that a conference call is not a perfect substitute for an in-person meeting, but even though it won’t be the same, everyone is doing their best to be transparent while conducting necessary business.
- When there is a technical glitch or “work-from-home” distraction (ex: dropped call; loud noise), briefly acknowledge the disruption, address the issue as quickly as possible (ex: call back in; mute participants), then return to the meeting agenda.
Holding an Online/Video Meeting

Why choose an online/video meeting?

- Online meetings in which participants can share video provide visual feedback, and therefore higher-quality interaction, than voice-only meetings.
- Online meetings also provide additional features, like screen sharing, that can enhance meetings.
- Online meetings can offer more accessibility options to the hearing impaired, who can take advantage of closed captioning or an American Sign Language interpreter. Additionally, participants without internet/computer access can still call in to an online meeting.

Case study: Oxford Township

Once the Governor issued the first Executive Order temporarily suspending the OMA requirement for a quorum to be physically present, Oxford Township began hosting public meetings using an all-virtual, video-conferencing format. They use the Zoom platform and purchased Zoom Pro so that meetings could last any length of time.

There have been several benefits as well as some minor challenges associated with adjusting to the new video-conferencing format. Oxford’s members have appreciated the increased convenience and reduced health risks as a result of the format’s de facto social distancing. They have also avoided any difficulty of hearing fellow meeting participants that may arise at an in-person meeting from social distancing and muffled speaking while wearing a mask. However, converting to this format has required that participants make slight adjustments. One common issue is that participants’ video will freeze and they have to exit the application and log back on. These delays usually last no more than 1-2 minutes. In addition, participants physically raise their hands to request to speak, which feels odd compared to an in-person meeting. (They do not use Zoom’s “raise hand” feature.) For security purposes, Oxford makes use of Zoom’s “Waiting Room” feature so that Oxford’s meeting monitor can speak with an incoming guest to confirm the guest is present for the right reasons, to prevent “Zoom bombing,” which happened at their meeting once prior to implementing this protocol.

Township officials are careful to prepare for online meetings as they would for in-person meetings. This often means having documents printed so that their laptop screen can be reserved for screen sharing in the Zoom meeting. While some township officials were initially nervous about the transition to video-conferencing, they adjusted to the new technology and protocols after the first or second online meeting.
I. Preparing for the meeting

**Online meeting service**
- Choose an online meeting service that provides the features you need and fits your budget.
- Zoom is a popular service, with a limited free version as well as several tiers of paid service that are relatively affordable. It offers many features that townships have found useful in hosting virtual meetings, including muting, recording, a waiting room, breakout rooms, hand raising, and more. Zoom’s Pro Plan is $14.99 per month and gives you an extended time limit for online meetings (24-hour limit compared to the free version’s 40-minute limit).

**Technical requirements & equipment**
- Participants will need computers or mobile devices with reliable internet access.
- For the participant to use computer sound, their computer or mobile device will need to have a microphone and speakers, either built-in or attached. Otherwise the participant can call in to the online meeting to use their landline or cell phone’s sound.
- For others to see the participant, the participant’s computer or mobile device will need to have a camera, either built-in or attached.
- Headphones or headsets with microphones are additional accessories that can help reduce audio feedback during online meetings.
- Zoom support resources recommend that meeting hosts and participants have internet speeds of at least 800kbps/1.0Mbps (up/down) for high-quality video.

**Facilitation**
- As with in-person meetings, virtual meetings run more smoothly when a designated facilitator, such as the township clerk or an administrative staff person, helps the person who is running the meeting. The facilitator can act as the “host” or “co-host” of the online meeting.
- In addition to the recordkeeping and meeting management that a facilitator would normally provide, the facilitator should become familiar with the online meeting service so that they can use all of the features and help address technical issues as needed.

**Security**
- Check the online meeting platform’s terms of service to make sure that meetings are not automatically recorded or used for any purpose without your permission.
- Make sure that you have downloaded any updates to the online meeting platform you are using. These updates may include security updates.

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1 Zoom system requirements: [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-Windows-macOS-and-Linux](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-Windows-macOS-and-Linux)
Some online meeting services have features that allow the host to let people in to
the meeting as they join (on Zoom, this feature is called “waiting room”). This can
be helpful for keeping track of who is in the meeting. However, keep in mind that
public bodies are not allowed to require participants to identify themselves by
name before they can join the meeting.

Some online meeting services allow you to set a password that participants must
enter in order to join the meeting. If you use this feature to increase security,
make sure you clearly include the password on the meeting notice along with the
rest of the information about joining the meeting.

II. During the meeting

Minutes/recordkeeping

- Most online meeting services can record meetings. This may be a good option if
you don’t have a facilitator available to take minutes during the meeting.

- Some online meeting services include a chat function. Some services, like Zoom,
will send the chat transcript to the host after the meeting. You may want to
consider disabling or restricting the use of the chat function, since 1) public chat
messages must be read out loud to comply with the requirement that all meeting
discussion must be heard by all attendees, and 2) private chat messages
between board members could be considered violations of the requirement that
all deliberation take place in public.

Public participation

- The Open Meetings Act does not allow public bodies to require participants to
identify themselves in order to participate in an open meeting. However, public
bodies are allowed to make reasonable rules about when participants are
allowed to comment in order to minimize disruptions.

- Most online meeting services allow the host to mute and unmute participants (on
Zoom, this can be done on the “participants” dashboard). This can help minimize
disruptions if too many people are speaking at once or if there is a disruptive
caller.

- Some online meeting services allow participants to indicate when they want to
speak (on Zoom, this feature is called “raise hand”). This can help the facilitator
manage public comments.

- If participants send written comments, including via a chat function, they should
be read out loud during the meeting to satisfy the requirement that comments
must be heard by all meeting attendees.

Board/Commission member participation/communication

- Members of the public body should be careful not to deliberate or make decisions
via private electronic communications, including text, email, and chat, outside of
or during public meetings. Members should also be careful about using the chat function in an online meeting. Private chat messages should not be used, and any public chat messages should also be read out loud.

- Roll call votes are the clearest way to make decisions during an online meeting.

**Closed sessions**

- Some online meeting services allow the host to put certain participants into separate online meetings (on Zoom, this feature is called “breakout rooms”). Members of a public body, and other required attendees like the supervisor or attorneys, could be placed into a breakout room by the facilitator to conduct a closed session.
- Alternatively, members of a public body and other required attendees could leave the public online meeting and join a separate online meeting or conference call to conduct a closed session.
- Once the closed session has concluded, members of the public body must return to the public online meeting to make decisions or conduct any further business, even if it is only to adjourn the meeting.

**Glitches/WFH distractions**

- Be honest and open with your constituents. Acknowledge that an online meeting is not a perfect substitute for an in-person meeting, but even though it won’t be the same, everyone is doing their best to be transparent and conduct necessary business.
- When there is a technical glitch or “work-from-home” distraction (ex: frozen video; loud noise), briefly acknowledge the disruption, address the issue as quickly as possible (ex: leave and rejoin meeting; mute participants), then return to the meeting agenda.
Holding a Hybrid Virtual/In-person Meeting

Why choose a hybrid virtual/in-person meeting?

- Currently in-person meeting attendance is not advisable (social distancing, EO 2020-110, 115) and not required for quorum (EO 2020-129).
- However, some townships have chosen to hold in-person meetings, which currently means that they must continue offering virtual meeting access.

Case study: Chikaming Township

From the start of the pandemic, Chikaming Township conducted hybrid in-person and video-conference public meetings. The township purchased the Pro version of Zoom. The township used features such as muting participants, screen sharing, participants using the phone-only option, and hand-raising for public comment.

Chikaming found many benefits and drawbacks to the video-conferencing format. Benefits included convenience and reduced health risks due to the de facto social distancing, and increased attendance. In addition, residents who live out of town for some months of the year were able to participate. Drawbacks included poor sound quality, sound delays, and spotty connectivity for some participants; these issues were not easily solved. In addition, participants found that it became more difficult to understand other participants’ emotion and body language as a result of meeting virtually.

Chikaming continues to offer hybrid virtual/in-person open meetings to accommodate the governor’s requirement to keep in-person gatherings below 10 people. Chikaming may revert back to socially distanced all-in-person meetings while reserving the option to add a virtual component upon resident request, but they also will want clarification from the state on those rules.

I. Preparing for the meeting

Conference or online meeting service

- Choose a conference service or an online meeting service that provides the features you need and fits your budget.
- FreeConferenceCall.com is a popular free/pay-what-you-can service with helpful features including muting, recording, and an online dashboard to manage calls and recordings.
- Zoom is a popular service, with a limited free version as well as several tiers of paid service that are relatively affordable. It offers many features that townships
have found useful in hosting virtual meetings, including muting, recording, a waiting room, breakout rooms, hand raising, and more.

- Zoom's Pro Plan is $14.99 per month and also offers an audio-only conferencing option.

**Technical requirements & equipment**

- **Conference call**
  - A conference phone that is designed to pick up multiple voices could help virtual participants hear the in-person meeting more clearly. Depending on the size of the room, additional conference phone microphones may also be needed.
  - Each virtual participant needs a mobile or landline phone to participate.
  - Headsets with microphones and earpieces are additional useful accessories.

- **Online meeting**
  - One key challenge of hybrid online meetings is making sure that all participants can be heard and, if possible, seen by the other participants. There are many technological tools to address this challenge.
  - **In-person participants:**
    - Hand-held microphones, as well as a sound system with microphones for members of the public body, can help make sure that all of the in-person participants in a meeting are heard.
    - A motion-sensing camera can be helpful for capturing all of the in-person participants in a meeting. Alternatively, one or two static cameras could be used to capture the public body and the audience.
    - A monitor, smart TV, or projector and screen can be helpful for displaying all of the virtual participants to the attendees at the in-person meeting.
  - **Virtual participants:**
    - Virtual participants will need computers or mobile devices with reliable internet access.
    - For a virtual participant to use computer sound, their computer or mobile device will need to have a microphone and speakers, either built-in or attached. Otherwise the participant can call in to the online meeting to use their landline or cell phone’s sound.
    - For others to see a virtual participant, the participant’s computer or mobile device will need to have a camera, either built-in or attached.

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2 Zoom system requirements: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-Windows-macOS-and-Linux
Zoom support resources recommend that virtual meeting hosts and participants have internet speeds of at least 800kbps/1.0Mbps (up/down) for high-quality video.

- Headphones or headsets with microphones are additional accessories that can help capture audio and reduce audio feedback for all participants during hybrid online meetings.

**Facilitation**

- Hybrid meetings are complex - essentially two meetings, one in-person and one virtual, running at the same time. As with in-person meetings, hybrid meetings run more smoothly when one or more designated facilitator(s), such as the township clerk and/or administrative staff, helps the person who is running the meeting. The facilitator(s) can act as the “host” or “co-host” of the conference call or online meeting.
- In addition to the recordkeeping and meeting management that a facilitator would normally provide, the facilitator(s) should become familiar with the conference call or online meeting service so that they can use all of the features and help address technical issues as needed.

**Security**

- **Conference call**
  - Check the phone conferencing system’s terms of service to make sure that calls are not automatically recorded or used for any purpose without your permission.
  - Most conference call services have a “call count” feature that will tell you how many people are on the call (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can get a call count by dialing *2).
  - Some services will send the host a report after the call of who was on the call and for how long.
  - Some services will also allow you to see and manage participants via an online dashboard during the call.

- **Online meeting**
  - Check the online meeting platform’s terms of service to make sure that meetings are not automatically recorded or used for any purpose without your permission.
  - Make sure that you have downloaded any updates to the online meeting platform you are using. These updates may include security updates.
  - Some online meeting services have features that allow the host to let people in to the meeting as they join (on Zoom, this feature is called “waiting room”). This can be helpful for keeping track of who is in the meeting. However, keep in mind that public bodies are not allowed to require that participants identify themselves by name before they can join the meeting.
Some online meeting services allow you to set a password that participants must enter in order to join the meeting. If you use this feature to increase security, make sure you clearly include the password on the meeting notice along with the rest of the information about joining the meeting.

II. During the meeting

Minutes/recordkeeping
- Most conference call and online meeting services can record meetings. This may be a good option if you don’t have a facilitator available to take minutes during the meeting.
- Some online meeting services include a chat function. Some services, like Zoom, will send the chat transcript to the host after the meeting. You may want to consider disabling or restricting the use of the chat function, since 1) public chat messages must be read out loud to comply with the requirement that all meeting discussion must be heard by all attendees, and 2) private chat messages between board members could be considered violations of the requirement that all deliberation take place in public.

Public participation
- You may want to state on the meeting notice the number of people who can fit in the in-person meeting room given any social distancing rules in effect. State what the procedure will be for attendees who arrive after the meeting room is full (e.g., they can call into the conference call, or join the online meeting).
- If you know an agenda item is controversial and the meeting will attract many attendees, you may want to consider holding the meeting only virtually (via conference call or online meeting service) in order to minimize the risk of violating any social distancing or public gathering rules in effect.
- The Open Meetings Act does not allow public bodies to require that participants identify themselves in order to participate in an open meeting. However, public bodies are allowed to make reasonable rules about when participants are allowed to comment in order to minimize disruptions.
- Minimizing conference call disruptions:
  - Most conference services have a feature that allows the host to mute and unmute all participants (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can mute and unmute participants by dialing *5). This can help minimize disruptions if too many people are speaking at once or if there is a disruptive caller.
  - Participants can unmute themselves when it is their turn to comment (on FreeConferenceCall.com, you can mute and unmute yourself by dialing *6).
- Minimizing online meeting disruptions:
Most online meeting services allow the host to mute and unmute participants (on Zoom, this can be done on the “participants” dashboard). This can help minimize disruptions if too many people are speaking at once or if there is a disruptive caller.

Some online meeting services allow participants to indicate when they want to speak (on Zoom, this feature is called “hand raising”). This can help the facilitator manage public comments.

- If participants send written comments, including via a chat function, they should be read out loud during the meeting to satisfy the requirement that comments must be heard by all meeting attendees.

**Board/Commission member participation/communication**

- Members of the public body should be careful not to deliberate or make decisions via private electronic communications, including text, email, and chat, outside of or during public meetings. Members should also be careful about using the chat function in an online meeting. Private chat messages should not be used, and any public chat messages should also be read out loud.
- Roll call votes are the clearest way to make decisions that can be heard by all participants during a hybrid meeting.

**Closed sessions**

- If all of the members of the public body and required attendees for the closed session are present in person, the closed session can be conducted in person (in a separate room or in the main meeting room that has been cleared of other attendees). Make sure the virtual participants who remain in the public meeting are not able to hear the closed session.
- If some members of a public body and other required attendees are present in person and some are virtual, the closed session can be conducted in a separate online meeting or conference call (with the in-person attendees in a separate room or in the main meeting room that has been cleared of other attendees).
- Once the closed session has concluded, members of the public body must return to the public meeting (or allow the public to return to the meeting room) to make decisions or conduct any further business, even if it is only to adjourn the meeting.

**Glitches/WFH distractions**

- Be honest and open with your constituents. Acknowledge that a hybrid meeting is challenging to run and not a perfect substitute for a fully in-person meeting. Even though it won’t be the same, everyone is doing their best to be transparent and conduct necessary business.
- When there is a technical glitch or “work-from-home” distraction (ex: frozen video; loud noise), briefly acknowledge the disruption, address the issue as quickly as
possible (ex: leave and rejoin meeting; mute participants), then return to the meeting agenda.
Appendix A: Key Open Meetings Act & Executive Order Requirements

Notices

OMA citations:
1. 15.264 (b) “A public notice for a public body shall always be posted at its principal office and any other locations considered appropriate by the public body. Cable television may also be utilized for purposes of posting public notice.”
2. 15.264 (d) “If a public body does not have a principal office, the required public notice for a local public body shall be posted in the office of the county clerk in which the public body serves…”
3. 15.265 (1) “A meeting of a public body shall not be held unless public notice is given as provided in this section by a person designated by the public body.”
4. 15.265 (3) “If there is a change in the schedule of regular meetings of a public body, there shall be posted within 3 days after the meeting at which the change is made, a public notice stating the new dates, times, and places of its regular meetings.”
5. 15.265 (4) “…for a rescheduled regular or a special meeting of a public body, a public notice stating the date, time, and place of the meeting shall be posted at least 18 hours before the meeting in a prominent and conspicuous place at both the public body’s principal office and, if the public body directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence that includes monthly or more frequent updates of public meeting agendas or minutes, on a portion of the website that is fully accessible to the public.”
6. 15.265 (5) “…Nothing in this section bars a public body from meeting in emergency session in the event of a severe and imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the public when 2/3 of the members serving on the body decide that delay would be detrimental to efforts to lessen or respond to the threat. However, if a public body holds an emergency public meeting that does not comply with the 18-hour posted notice requirement, it shall make paper copies of the public notice for the emergency meeting available to the public at that meeting. The notice shall include an explanation of the reasons that the public body cannot comply with the 18-hour posted notice requirement. The explanation shall be specific to the circumstances that necessitated the emergency public meeting, and the use of generalized explanations such as "an imminent threat to the health of the public" or "a danger to public welfare and safety" does not meet the explanation requirements of this subsection. If the public body directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence that includes monthly or more frequent updates of public meeting agendas or minutes, it shall post the public notice of the emergency meeting and its explanation on its website in the manner described for an internet posting in subsection (4). “
EO 2020-129 citations:

1. (1)(e) “If a public body directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence, the public body must, consistent with and in addition to any other applicable notice requirements under the OMA, post advance notice of a meeting held electronically on a portion of the public body’s website that is fully accessible to the public. The public notice on the website must be included on either the homepage or on a separate webpage dedicated to public notices for non-regularly scheduled public meetings or electronic meetings and accessible through a prominent and conspicuous link on the website’s homepage that clearly describes its purpose for public notification of those non-regularly scheduled or electronic public meetings. Notice of a meeting of a public body that will be held electronically must include all of the following: (i) An explanation of the reason why the public body is meeting electronically. (ii) Detailed procedures by which the public may participate in the meeting remotely, including a telephone number, internet address, or both. (iii) Procedures by which persons may contact members of the public body to provide input or ask questions on any business that will come before the public body at the meeting. (iv) Procedures by which persons with disabilities may participate in the meeting.”

2. (1)(j) “If a public body holding a meeting electronically directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence, the public body is encouraged to make available to the general public through the public body’s website homepage an agenda and other materials relating to the meeting.”

Quorum

OMA citation:

1. 15.263 (3) “All deliberations of a public body constituting a quorum of its members shall take place at a meeting open to the public except as provided in this section and sections 7 and 8 [regarding closed sessions].”

EO 2020-129 citations:

1. (1) “To the extent that the Open Meetings Act (“OMA”), 1976 PA 267, as amended, MCL 15.261 to 15.272, requires that a meeting of a public body be held in a physical place available to the general public or requires the physical presence of one or more members of a public body, strict compliance with section 3 of the OMA, MCL 15.263, is temporarily suspended in order to alleviate any such physical-place or physical-presence requirements, as follows: (a) A meeting of a public body may be held electronically, including by telephonic conferencing or video conferencing, in a manner in which both the general public and the members of the public body may participate by electronic means.”
2. (1)(c) “Members of a public body and of the general public participating electronically will be considered present and in attendance at the meeting and may participate in the meeting as if physically present at the meeting.”

Public participation

OMA citations:
1. 15.263 (1) “All meetings of a public body shall be open to the public and shall be held in a place available to the general public. All persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting except as otherwise provided in this act...a public body may establish reasonable rules and regulations in order to minimize the possibility of disrupting the meeting.” [reiterated in EO 2020-129 (1), (1)(f)]
2. 15.263 (4) “A person shall not be required as a condition of attendance at a meeting of a public body to register or otherwise provide his or her name or other information or otherwise to fulfill a condition precedent to attendance.”
3. 15.263 (5) “A person shall be permitted to address a meeting of a public body under rules established and recorded by the public body....”
4. 15.263 (6) “A person shall not be excluded from a meeting otherwise open to the public except for a breach of the peace actually committed at the meeting.”

EO 2020-129 citations:
1. (1) “To the extent that the Open Meetings Act (“OMA”), 1976 PA 267, as amended, MCL 15.261 to 15.272, requires that a meeting of a public body be held in a physical place available to the general public or requires the physical presence of one or more members of a public body, strict compliance with section 3 of the OMA, MCL 15.263, is temporarily suspended in order to alleviate any such physical-place or physical-presence requirements, as follows: (a) A meeting of a public body may be held electronically, including by telephonic conferencing or video conferencing, in a manner in which both the general public and the members of the public body may participate by electronic means.”
2. (1)(b) “A meeting of a public body held electronically must be conducted in a manner that permits two-way communication so that members of the public body can hear and be heard by other members of the public body and so that general public participants can hear members of the public body and can be heard by members of the public body and other participants during a public comment period. The public body may use technology to facilitate typed public comments that may be read to or shared with members of the public body and other participants to satisfy the requirement that members of the public can be heard by others during the meeting.”
3. (1)(c) “Members of a public body and of the general public participating electronically will be considered present and in attendance at the meeting and may participate in the meeting as if physically present at the meeting.”

4. (1)(d) “All persons must be permitted to participate in any meeting of a public body held electronically, except as otherwise provided in the OMA.”

5. (1)(g) “A public body may not require a person as a condition of participating in a meeting of the public body held electronically to register or otherwise provide his or her name or other information or otherwise to fulfill a condition precedent to attendance, other than mechanisms necessary to permit the person to participate in a public comment period of the meeting.”

6. (1)(h) “A person must be permitted to address a meeting of a public body held electronically under rules established and recorded by the public body. A person must not be excluded from a meeting held electronically otherwise open to the public except for a breach of the peace actually committed during the meeting.”

7. (4) “If a statute or rule other than the OMA requires that public comments be permitted or a public hearing be held, including in conjunction with the issuance of a permit or a hearing required under the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, 1968 PA 2, as amended, MCL 141.421 to 141.440a, a public body or department or agency may provide a means for remote public comment or participation through the use of any technology that would facilitate a member of the general public’s ability to participate remotely to the same extent as if the member of the general public appeared in person. If not expressly authorized by statute or rule, written comment, including by electronic means, also is permitted.”

Decision-making

OMA citation:
1. 15.263 (2) “All decisions of a public body shall be made at a meeting open to the public.”

EO 2020-129 citations:
1. (1)(i) “During a meeting of a public body held electronically, members of the public body are urged to take all votes by roll call to avoid any questions about how each member of the public body votes.”

2. (2) “A public body holding a meeting electronically as provided under this order is encouraged to do so in a manner that effectuates as fully as possible the purposes of the OMA, which include promoting government accountability and fostering openness in government to enhance responsible decision-making. Discussions or deliberations at an open meeting that cannot at a minimum be heard by the general public participating in the meeting are contrary to these purposes. Accordingly, members of a public body must avoid using email, texting, instant messaging, and other such electronic forms of
communication to make a decision or deliberate toward a decision, and must avoid “round-the-horn” decision-making in a manner not accessible to the public at an open meeting.”

3. (3) “If a decision or other action of a public body complies with the requirements of this order and the other requirements of the OMA, it must be considered to comply with the OMA.”

Budget hearings

Uniform Budgeting Act (2) citation:

1. 141.434 (5) “The chief administrative officer shall furnish to the legislative body information the legislative body requires for proper consideration of the recommended budget. Before final passage of a general appropriations act by the legislative body, a public hearing shall be held as required by 1963 (2nd Ex Sess) PA 43, MCL 141.411 to 141.415, and the open meetings act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275.”

Budget Hearings of Local Governments Act (43) Citations:

1. 141.412 “A local unit shall hold a public hearing on its proposed budget. The local unit shall give notice of the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the local unit at least 6 days before the hearing. The notice shall include the time and place of the hearing and shall state the place where a copy of the budget is available for public inspection. The notice shall also include the following statement printed in 11-point boldfaced type: “The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.”

2. 141.413 “Each local unit shall hold such public hearing prior to final adoption of its budget. Except for a local unit that has a fiscal year that begins before the convening of the county tax allocation board, a local unit that submits its budget to a county tax allocation board shall hold such hearing after its tax rate allocation has been fixed by such board.”

EO 2020-129 citation:

1. (4) “If a statute or rule other than the OMA requires that public comments be permitted or a public hearing be held, including in conjunction with the issuance of a permit or a hearing required under the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, 1968 PA 2, as amended, MCL 141.421 to 141.440a, a public body or department or agency may provide a means for remote public comment or participation through the use of any technology that would facilitate a member of the general public’s ability to participate remotely to the same extent as if the member of the general public appeared in person.”
Closed sessions

OMA citations:

1. 15.263 (3) “All deliberations of a public body constituting a quorum of its members shall take place at a meeting open to the public except as provided in this section and sections 7 and 8 [regarding closed sessions].”

2. 15.267 (1) “A 2/3 roll call vote of members elected or appointed and serving is required to call a closed session, except for the closed sessions permitted under section 8(a), (b), (c), (g), (i), and (j). The roll call vote and the purpose or purposes for calling the closed session shall be entered into the minutes of the meeting at which the vote is taken.”

3. 15.267 (2) “A separate set of minutes shall be taken by the clerk or the designated secretary of the public body at the closed session. These minutes shall be retained by the clerk of the public body, are not available to the public, and shall only be disclosed if required by a civil action filed under section 10, 11, or 13. These minutes may be destroyed 1 year and 1 day after approval of the minutes of the regular meeting at which the closed session was approved.”

4. 15.268 “A public body may meet in a closed session only for the following purposes: (a) To consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, or to consider a periodic personnel evaluation of, a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent, if the named person requests a closed hearing. A person requesting a closed hearing may rescind the request at any time, in which case the matter at issue shall be considered after the rescission only in open sessions...(c) For strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement if either negotiating party requests a closed hearing. (d) To consider the purchase or lease of real property up to the time an option to purchase or lease that real property is obtained. (e) To consult with its attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, but only if an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the public body. (f) To review and consider the contents of an application for employment or appointment to a public office if the candidate requests that the application remain confidential. However, except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, all interviews by a public body for employment or appointment to a public office shall be held in an open meeting pursuant to this act... (h) To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute...”

EO 2020-129 citations:
1. (1)(k) “Members of the general public otherwise participating in a meeting of a public body held electronically may be excluded from participation in a closed session of the public body held electronically during that meeting if the closed session is convened and held in compliance with the requirements of the OMA applicable to a closed session.”

Minutes

OMA citations:
1. 15.269 (1) “Each public body shall keep minutes of each meeting showing the date, time, place, members present, members absent, any decisions made at a meeting open to the public, and the purpose or purposes for which a closed session is held. The minutes shall include all roll call votes taken at the meeting…”
2. 15.269 (3) “A public body shall make proposed minutes available for public inspection within 8 business days after the meeting to which the minutes refer. The public body shall make approved minutes available for public inspection within 5 business days after the meeting at which the minutes are approved by the public body.”
3. 15.267 (2) “A separate set of minutes shall be taken by the clerk or the designated secretary of the public body at the closed session. These minutes shall be retained by the clerk of the public body, are not available to the public, and shall only be disclosed if required by a civil action filed under section 10, 11, or 13. These minutes may be destroyed 1 year and 1 day after approval of the minutes of the regular meeting at which the closed session was approved.”

EO 2020-129 citation:
1. (1)(j) “If a public body holding a meeting electronically directly or indirectly maintains an official internet presence, the public body is encouraged to make available to the general public through the public body’s website homepage an agenda and other materials relating to the meeting.”

ADA/Closed Captioning

Americans with Disabilities Act citations:
1. 35.160(a)(1) “A public entity shall take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.”
2. 35.160(b)(1) “A public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford qualified individuals with disabilities, including applicants, participants, companions, and members of the public, an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity of a public entity.”
3. 35.160(b)(2) “The type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication will vary in accordance with the method of communication used by the individual; the nature, length, and complexity of the communication involved; and the context in which the communication is taking place. In determining what types of auxiliary aids and services are necessary, a public entity shall give primary consideration to the requests of individuals with disabilities. In order to be effective, auxiliary aids and services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in such a way as to protect the privacy and independence of the individual with a disability.”
DeWitt Charter Township
Open Meeting Policy & Procedure Manual
Adopted by Township Board of DeWitt Charter Township at a
Regular Board meeting held on July 13, 2020

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1. **Introduction**

This policy and procedure document is designed to serve as a guide for all DeWitt Charter Township Boards, Committees, and Commissions subject to the Open Meetings Act (OMA), Act 267 of 1976, as amended, MCL 15.261 to 15.272.

2. **Purpose**

This policy addresses procedural changes related to the OMA as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and its impact on public bodies’ ability to hold in-person meetings. Specific items are likely to change as Executive Orders expire and “social distancing” requirements change. Those items are printed in *italics* for future modification.

The following procedures and systems were developed by the Board of Trustees to ensure efficient conduct of business in a manner that is fair and equitable to both membership and the public. The intent of this policy is to provide direction to the Township’s Boards, Committees, and Commissions and authorize remote participation for both membership and the public to the extent permitted by law or executive order.

For all questions related to open meetings but not covered in this policy, please review the OMA and Executive Order 2020-129.

3. **Definitions**

   a. **Public body**: MCL 15.262(a) defines a “public body” as “any state or local legislative or governing body, including a board, commission, committee, subcommittee, authority, or council, that is empowered by state constitution, statute, charter, ordinance, resolution or rule to exercise governmental or proprietary authority … .” Any committee, subcommittee or other body that meets the definition of “public body” will be subject to the OMA.

   b. **Meeting**: MCL 15.262(b) defines a “meeting” as “the convening of a public body at which a quorum is present for the purpose of deliberating toward or rendering a decision on a public policy … .”

   c. **Decision**: MCL 15.262(d) defines a “decision” as “a determination, action, vote, or disposition upon a motion, proposal, recommendation, resolution, order, ordinance, bill, or measure on which a vote by members of a public body is required and by which a public body effectuates or formulates public policy.”

   d. **Quorum**: the minimum number of members of an assembly or society that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. If a quorum of a public body does not attend a scheduled regular or special meeting, then business cannot be conducted, and a meeting cannot be held. The same holds true if a quorum is lost during a meeting.
e. **Regular meetings:** MCL 15.265 effectively defines a “regular meeting” of a public body as a meeting that is on the schedule of meetings adopted by the body and posted within 10 days after the first meeting of the public body’s year (fiscal or calendar).

f. **Special meetings:** MCL 15.265 effectively defines a “special meeting” of a public body as a meeting that is not on the schedule of regular meetings, and is called as needed to address business between regular meetings.

g. **Facilitator:** a person or thing that makes an action or process easy or easier. For public meetings, the facilitator can be designated by the meeting chair to execute the items outlines in sections 4, 5, & 6 of this policy, with the intent of maintaining order and efficiently conducting the business of the body in a public forum. The Chair is still the designated leader of the meeting unless absent. The Chair is responsible for open and adjourning the meeting, calling for motions and votes, and ensuring the agenda is followed. When absent, the remainder of membership will vote to designate a Chairperson.

4. **Prior to a meeting**

   a. A public notice for a meeting of a public body must always be posted at its principal office, either within 10 days of the setting of a schedule of regular meetings, or at least 18 hours prior to a special meeting. (MCL 15.264)

   b. The Clerk or meeting organizer will provide an agenda for membership and public. (See Attachment - A for suggested Agenda contents)

   c. The Clerk or meeting organizer will provide a conference phone number on the posted agenda. See DeWitt Township Clerk to have a conference number assigned.

   d. **COVID-19:** Executive Order 2020-129 allows a public body to hold a meeting electronically until July 31, 2020, and also suspends physical-presence requirements during that time. The EO thus permits the formation of a quorum by telephonic or video conferencing. A meeting of a public body held electronically must be conducted in a manner that permits two-way communication so that members of the public body can hear and be heard by other members of the public body and so that general public participants can hear members of the public body and can be heard by members of the public body and other participants during a public comment period.

   e. **COVID-19:** Executive Order 2020-110 limits public gatherings to 10 persons, subject to social distancing guidelines (masks, 6 foot spacing). If there are more than 10 public attendees, provide the conference number and allow them to call in. Always provide the conference number to a member of the public who requests it.

   f. Initiate the conference call 15 minutes prior to established start time of meeting.
g. Instruct remote participants to dial-in at 5-to-15 minutes prior to established start time of meeting.

h. The Clerk, recording secretary, or meeting facilitator will monitor call-ins and provide the meeting Chairperson or facilitator with a written roll of all attendees in person and on call at time of call-to-order. Late attendees will be asked to identify themselves by name when they dial-in. (Attachment – B)

i. The meeting Chairperson calls the meeting to order. The Clerk, recording secretary, or meeting facilitator will monitor the call, and will announce membership and guests (“on the call we have…”, “the Clerk / recording secretary has recorded the roll…”).

j. The meeting Chairperson or facilitator may invite on-call membership to make opening comments.

5. During the Meeting

a. The Chair / Facilitator must strictly maintain order.

   i. Questions and comments asked of membership and guests are done by title and name.

   ii. Only one person will be allowed to speak at a time.

   iii. Requests to speak by membership and guests (interruptions) are not allowed as each member or guest will be afforded the opportunity to speak at the designated time.

   iv. Those members, guests, and any public attending on conference call shall be reminded to keep their phones on mute. They will be called upon to comment at the appropriate time.

b. The agenda will be followed in its familiar format. (Attachment – A)

   i. As mentioned above, membership may be invited for an opening comment before any business is conducted.

   ii. Membership and guests will be afforded their usual end-of-meeting comment time.

c. All votes (agenda, consent agenda, new and old business) will be conducted as a ROLL CALL VOTE.

d. Only the vote of adjournment shall be done as a voice vote (“all in favor…”)
6. **Conducting Old / New Business**

   a. Chair / Facilitator introduces member or guest responsible for presenting the business item.

   b. Member or guest presents business item. *(present proposal)*

   c. Chair / Facilitator initiates a round-table discussion, calling membership by title and name, in turn, as appropriate.

      i. Clarification & question round, if necessary. All questions will be answered by the appropriate person(s), in the order received, at the end of the completed round (not one at a time).

      ii. A second clarification & question round, if necessary. Again, all questions will be answered by the appropriate person(s), in the order received, at the end of the completed round (not one at a time).

      iii. Amendments to the proposed action, if appropriate, by any member.

      iv. Further discussion round.

   d. When every member has contributed to their satisfaction, meeting Chair or Facilitator can call for a motion.

   e. Motion will be called by meeting Chair or Facilitator, at random, by calling member by title and name. Member will be asked if they would like to make a motion on the suggested action, and member may make motion, or decline and another member will be chosen at random. Clerk or recording secretary will record motion.

   f. Second will be called by meeting Chair or Facilitator, at random, by calling member by title and name, excluding member who made motion. Member will be asked if they would like to make a motion on the suggested action, and member may make motion, or decline and another member will be chosen at random. Clerk or recording secretary will record second.

   g. The public will be invited to comment by dialing 5* on their phone keypad. The Chair or meeting facilitator may then call upon members of the public, in turn, by using their phone number as listed in the conference program provided by the Clerk.

   h. The Clerk or recording secretary will take a roll call vote and announce the result of the vote.
7. **Attendance**

a. Attendance for meetings of DeWitt Township’s Public Bodies will be kept by the recording secretary.

   i. Present

   ii. Excused Absent

   iii. Unexcused Absent

b. Attendance requirements are outlined in each body’s bylaws.

c. **COVID-19:** At this time, remote attendance shall construe full participation in that it can be utilized for both the making of a quorum and voting. This will be readdressed as Executive Orders and other changes get rolled-out due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

d. **COVID-19:** Prior to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, full remote participation was only allowable for members serving in the military pursuant to MCL 15.263, with a strict set of rules for compliance (i.e., open meeting at remote location). When the Executive Orders expire along with the suspension of physical-presence requirements, it is the intent of this document to maintain a level of remote attendance as policy. At that time, however, remote participation will not allow for the formation of a quorum or otherwise permit remote voting, unless there is a statutory amendment to the OMA. This document will be amended upon expiration of the Executive Orders.
AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR BOARD MEETING __:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
*Verbal roll of members present and on conference call

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS*

PUBLIC HEARING

PRESENTATIONS

COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPORT

CORRESPONDENCE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC** & STAFF COMMENTS

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Note:  Public Participation Policy adopted 9/11/89 provides:

*Public Comments on agenda items shall be limited to three (3) minutes.  Any citizen may address the Board regarding any agenda item at this time, or they may reserve the right to address the Board when the agenda item is discussed.  Each citizen is limited to a total of 3 minutes on any one issue.

**Extended Public Comments - limited to five (5) minutes.  Any topic of Township interest can be addressed.

DeWitt Charter Township will provide to individuals with disabilities, reasonable auxiliary aids and services which are needed to fully participate in any Township meeting, providing a 72 hour notice is received by phone or in writing.  Contact DeWitt Charter Township, Clerk’s office, 1401 W. Herbison Road, DeWitt, MI 48820, or phone (517) 668-0270 to request the necessary assistance.

Board policy prohibits the use of cellular phones, pagers, and the noise emitted from the same.  Please disengage ringers on cell phones and pagers, and leave the meeting room if you need to have a phone conversation.
### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Dave Fedewa
- Brian Ross
- Steve Musselman
- David Seeger
- Sandy Stump
- Adam Cranton
- Rick Gieladi

### OTHER ATTENDEES

- Fire Chief, Dave Dekorte
- Police Chief, Mike Gute
- Manager, Andrew Dmochyk

Board of Trustees - Monday, May 11, 2020, 7:00 PM
Michigan Township Association
Software Synthesis
Executive Summary

This report aims to provide software platform recommendations for townships to hold Open Meetings Act (OMA)-compliant virtual meetings. To fully assess the virtual meeting software requirements for the Michigan Township Association (MTA), a data synthesis, uncovering six primary findings, was completed using the following methods: competitive analysis, survey analysis, interview analysis, and user personas. User Personas are "fictional characters" created to help define who the user is by highlighting each user's goals, motivations, and pain points. The personas provide examples of use cases to associate with our three recommendations.

Key Findings:

**Finding 1:** Zoom was the most preferred software platform with 122 respondents (59%) reporting using it for virtual meetings, with many stating the platform worked well for their needs

**Finding 2:** The top six software features respondents thought were critical indicate that only the basic features are needed to conduct virtual meetings

**Finding 3:** Training/instructions and tech support received mixed results in terms of being critical to virtual meetings, despite that open-ended survey data said otherwise

**Finding 4:** 53% of respondents stated that Closed Captioning was “nice to have but not necessary” while only 25% stated it was critical

**Finding 5:** Interviewees were unaware of some of Zoom’s available features.

**Finding 6:** Interviewees said that audio quality and background noise were problematic; however, interviewees believe that these issues can be fixed with proper equipment and training

Software/Platform Recommendations:

**Townships with adequate internet connectivity and interest in holding virtual meetings**

Recommendation: *Zoom Pro Plan*

**Townships with moderate to poor internet connectivity that have an interest in holding virtual meetings but have concerns about making them accessible to the community**

Recommendation: *Zoom Pro Plan (Audio Conferencing) or FreeConferenceCall.com*

**Townships with either adequate or poor internet that have an interest in holding hybrid meetings.**

Recommendation: *Zoom Pro Plan or FreeConferenceCall.com with the addition of onsite hardware*
Research Question

What are the best software applications and critical features for townships to hold Open Meetings Act (OMA)-compliant virtual meetings?

Methods Overview

To fully assess the virtual meeting software requirements for Michigan Township Association (MTA), a data synthesis was completed using the following methods: competitive analysis, survey analysis, interview analysis, and user personas. The competitive analysis was completed by selecting a meaningful array of software platforms on the market and evaluating the features and capabilities among the different platforms, thus allowing us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each platform. The survey analysis was used to understand which features and capabilities townships believe are essential or necessary. The survey was also used to understand township attitudes toward virtual meetings, limitations of virtual meetings, and software preferences. Interviews informed an affinity diagram which identifies themes of township experiences with virtual meetings. Lastly, three personas were developed to represent generalizable users' experiences and to provide examples of user cases to associate with our recommendations.

Software Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis was performed on the ten software platforms included in MTA’s virtual meeting guidelines under Executive Order 2020-75 and the Open Meetings Act. Eighteen salient features were compared across the ten platforms (Appendix A). Although some of features compared did not comply with Open Meetings Act guidelines (e.g., private messaging), it was necessary to look at all of the features to understand platform capabilities.

Based on the comparison of the ten software platforms and their features and capabilities, superior platforms for video conferencing and teleconferencing were identified based on features and capabilities offered, pricing, and accessibility to citizens. The superior platforms identified for video conferencing include GoToMeetings and Zoom (Pro, Enterprise). The main drawback with Zoom’s free plan is group meetings have a time limit of 40 minutes. Skype business is not a viable option due to its scheduled discontinuation on July 31, 2021 and will be replaced with Microsoft Teams. While Microsoft Teams is a good video conferencing platform, it is more comparable to tools like Slack or other platforms that encourage collaboration amongst business teams.

Superior platforms for teleconferencing include: Zoom (Free, Pro, Enterprise) and FreeConferenceCall.com. Although RingCentral has an impressive number of features, it’s price tiers are the most expensive (Premium: $34.99 and Ultimate: $49.99). Appendix A goes into greater detail showcasing each of the features and capabilities among the ten software platforms.
**Software Platforms**

RingCentral       Vast Conference       WebEx
UberConference    GoToMeeting          Facebook Live
FreeConferenceCall.com Microsoft Teams
Skype             Zoom

---

**Software Features & Capabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Price Tiers</th>
<th>Meeting Time Limit</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Screen Sharing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost per Month</td>
<td>Closed Captioning</td>
<td>Chat/Messaging</td>
<td>Breakout Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User Capacity</td>
<td>Muting Participants</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Tech Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Host Capacity</td>
<td>Password/Security</td>
<td>Dial-in Capability</td>
<td>Participant Polling</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Document Sharing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**UM CCC Survey Analysis**

283 respondents completed the MTA’s UM CCC survey. Here is a breakdown of the respondents:
Two survey questions were related to software needs. The first asked respondents to name the software platforms they used to conduct virtual meetings and state what worked well/did not work well. The second question asked respondents to rate 11 software features/capabilities on whether they are "critical," "nice to have but not critical," or "unnecessary" to conduct virtual meetings. Although some respondents chose not to rate every option, each option received over 200 responses.

**Findings**

Finding 1: Zoom was the most preferred software platform with 122 respondents (59%) reporting using it for virtual meetings, with many stating the platform worked well for their needs.

203 of 283 survey respondents stated their boards had conducted one or more virtual meetings. The top three software platforms used were Zoom, FreeConferenceCall.com (FCC.com) and GoToMeeting. Here is a nominal and percentage breakdown of the platforms used by respondents:

![Virtual Mtg Software Used]

Although Zoom had more positive than negative feedback, most of the negative comments associated with Zoom were due to unstable internet, background noise from participants not muting themselves, or unfamiliarity with the platform. Some respondents experienced feedback issues when multiple people were using Zoom in the same room without headphones. These particular issues were experienced when townships conducted hybrid meetings--meetings with some in-person and some virtual participants. Respondents who used GoToMeeting and FreeConferenceCall.com had mostly positive experiences.
Finding 2: The top six software features respondents thought were critical indicate that only the basic features are needed to conduct virtual meetings

The top six software features respondents thought were critical are (Appendix B for full breakdown):

![Top Six Critical Software Features](image)

Based on survey responses, respondents need a platform that allows both elected officials and public participants to interact during meetings with voice and a public chat forum. Audio communication allows townships to conduct OMA-compliant roll call votes.

74% of respondents stated that security was a critical feature, while 41% felt it was nice to have but not necessary. Surprisingly, 18% of respondents felt security was unnecessary. Only one respondent reported experiencing a meeting disruption due to a hacker, while only five respondents expressed security concerns.

Finding 3: Training/instructions and tech support received mixed results in terms of being critical to virtual meetings, even though open-ended survey data said otherwise

When asked about training and receiving instructions, 42% of respondents stated this was a critical feature, while 46% said it was only nice to have. This result is surprising because several respondents mention having residents and officials who are not tech-savvy. Below are three open-ended survey responses discussing their aversion to meeting.
"ZOOM First Meeting - interviewed planners to do our Master Plan - it worked great. Second Meeting- lost feed after meeting started. Why it didn't work - our Clerk not well versed in ZOOM." (Anonymous)

"Webex- difficult for the older members. Zoom was easier." (Anonymous)

"I do not feel we have enough technical expertise or advice to prevent Zoom bombing" (Anonymous)

Finding 4: 53% of respondents stated that Closed Captioning was “nice to have but not necessary” while only 25% stated it was critical

The most surprising detail from the survey data was the low number of respondents who felt closed captioning was a critical feature, even though it is an accessibility requirement for individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, the survey data didn't allow a deeper dive into this statistic.

Interview Analysis

With a basic understanding of respondent viewpoints on critical virtual meeting features, we then interviewed select survey respondents to further understand their experiences. Due to time restrictions and response rates, only four respondents were interviewed: the Pentwater Township Clerk, the Oxford Township Treasurer, the Marquette Charter Township Supervisor, and Chikaming Township Supervisor. All four respondents' townships had successfully held virtual meetings over Zoom and shared their experiences (Appendix C).

Findings

Finding 5: Interviewees were unaware of some of Zoom’s available features.

Interviewees used the following Zoom features: waiting rooms, chat, video, muting participants, and messaging. When asked about additional features, such as closed captioning or breakout rooms for closed sessions, interviewees generally seemed unaware of these features but excited to try them for future virtual meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software Features Utilized</th>
<th>Software Features &amp; Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chat (4)</td>
<td>Tech Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video (4)</td>
<td>Dial-in Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mute Participants (4)</td>
<td>Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting Rooms (4)</td>
<td>Screen Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messaging (4)</td>
<td>Private Messaging</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removing participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recording</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding 6: Audio and background noise were issues mentioned by interviewees as problematic; however, interviewees believe that these issues can be fixed with proper equipment and training.

Most respondents said that Zoom worked great for virtual meetings. However, respondents said that Zoom had poor audio quality, background noise, and reverberation were some of their virtual meeting complications. In addition, interviewees mentioned technical issues or glitches, such as dropped service and frozen screens. Some interviewees acknowledged that training and procuring better equipment could address some of these issues. Below are selected open-ended survey responses in which respondents discuss their issues with Zoom.

“background noise did not work well due older computers without speakers (calling in via phone), reverberation due to multiple ppl being in the same room” (Clerk 1)

“Tech issues: sound and people freezing and having to come back into the meetings” (Treasurer 2)

“In order to continue virtual meetings: provide more up to date computers for members and training” (Treasurer 1)

“[We need] headphones and microphones can minimize reverberation” (Clerk 1)

Personas

Using data from the UM CCC survey and interviews, personas (Appendix D) or "fictional characters" were created to humanize and represent different user experiences. Personas help define who the user is by creating a brief scenario and highlighting each user’s goals, motivations, and pain points. Below are three use cases defined via the personas corresponding to the three main township categories that represent differing needs and levels of broadband internet access. They will be used to guide the recommendations for each type of township.

- **User Case 1**: Townships with adequate internet connectivity and interest in holding virtual meetings
- **User Case 2**: Townships with poor internet connectivity that may be interested in holding virtual meetings but have concerns about making them accessible to the community
User Case 3: Townships with either adequate or poor internet that would like to hold hybrid meetings (in-person township officials with remote resident participants)

User Case 1: Townships with adequate internet connectivity and interest in holding virtual meetings

The scenario associated with this case focuses on a township clerk named Alexia. She wants to keep her community safe and well-informed during COVID-19. Her township has a good internet connection but is concerned about hackers disrupting virtual meetings. This scenario represents concerns voiced both in the UM CCC survey data and during interviews.

Recommendation: Zoom Pro Plan

Given that approximately 60% of survey respondents said that Zoom met their virtual meeting needs, these townships should purchase the Zoom Pro Plan. The Pro Plan is $14.99 a month per host, with the option to purchase up to nine total hosts per account. Extra cloud recording storage and hosting video webinars are available for an extra $40 a month each. Interviewees said that they preferred the Pro Plan due to its generous meeting time limit of 24 hours compared with 40 minutes per meeting under the Zoom basic option. Besides the increased time limit, Zoom Pro provides multiple features that make moderating a virtual meeting easier. With Zoom, participants have the choice to attend virtual meetings by video conference or by cellular or landline phone.

Features to help manage virtual meetings

Muting participants - Addresses background noise due to participants not using headphones or forgetting to mute themselves. Both the moderator and participants can mute/unmute themselves as needed.

Waiting room - Helps maintain order by allowing the moderator to control when participants enter a meeting.

Breakout rooms - Can serve as a useful tool for closed sessions.

Recording - An additional feature to preserve meeting records. These recordings can be saved locally and later posted to a public website such as YouTube.

Transcription and Closed Captioning options

Three options:

1. The moderator or an assigned participant can transcribe meeting discussion and are made public during the meeting.
2. The moderator can select the "Live Transcription" option that automatically transcribes the meeting in real-time. Please note this feature works best when participants speak clearly.
3. Moderators can sign up for a third-party closed captioning service that requires a fee.
**Password protection** - Helps deter potential hackers and complies with the Open Meetings Act as long as the password is included in public postings.

**Screen sharing** - Allows participants to present slides and other documents during the meeting.

**Facebook and YouTube capability** - A user can stream a zoom meeting live on Facebook and YouTube. There will be a 20-second delay between the meeting and the live stream. Also, YouTube can create closed captioning for the meeting in real time.

**Public participation via voice and chat** - Participants can speak at any time.

**Raised hand function** - Informs the moderator when participants want to speak. This feature is useful for video but essential for participants that dial-in by phone.

Important note: Although FreeConferenceCall.com does offer online/video conferencing services, UM CCC survey respondents only mentioned using the audio version. Due to a lack of respondents using the video version and the huge amount of success with Zoom, Zoom was the best option for video conferencing.

**Collective purchasing option**

If there is a sufficient threshold of townships that wish to host virtual meetings, MTA or the state can purchase a Zoom Enterprise account and issue host accounts to townships that want to use Zoom. The Enterprise Plan has a base price of $19.99 per month per host with options to increase the number of hosts, starting at 100 hosts for $1,999 a month. The plan offers dedicated phone support by Zoom representatives, automatic meeting recording transcriptions, and a single sign-on option that allows a user to login using company credentials.

**User Case 2: Townships with poor internet connectivity that are interested in holding virtual meetings but are concerned about making them accessible to the community**

The persona associated with this case focuses on a township Treasurer named Dora. Her township has an unstable internet connection, but she needs a platform to conduct virtual meetings. Her virtual meeting software experience is limited but she understands that virtual meetings can help keep her community safe during COVID-19.

**Recommendation: Zoom Pro Plan (Audio Conferencing) or FreeConferenceCall.com**

**Zoom Pro Plan (Audio Conferencing)**

Townships can use Zoom's teleconferencing/audio conferencing capability. For this scenario, only the moderator needs to have a computer to moderate a session successfully. Participants can dial-in using a
traditional phone or smartphone. Roll call voting may take more time but can be done with organized moderation to reduce instances of participants talking over each other.

FreeConferenceCall.com ("FCC.com")
Another option for Townships that want to utilize a teleconferencing platform is FreeConferenceCall.com. Users can decide how much they want to pay for the service by what the platform calls "innovative pricing." Potential users can pay anything from $0-15 per month. Signing up for the platform is easy and quick. The free and paid versions allow users to host audio and online meetings with as many as 1,000 participants. The most notable difference between the plans is that paid users have access to custom branding, training, and a dedicated FreeConferenceCall.com account manager to help address issues.

Best features for moderators to help manage virtual meetings

International calling
Audio recording
Keypad Commands (muting, call count, and more on the website)
Online Dashboard for easier meeting moderation

Important note: Any teleconferencing platform may experience call drop-out if cell service is unstable in a township, but an audio conference platform is preferred over the use of video conferencing. FreeConferenceCall.com was chosen over other teleconferencing platforms due to its affordable price, ease of use/setup, and the ability to utilize breakout rooms for closed sessions.

User Case 3 section: Townships with either adequate or poor internet that would like to hold hybrid meetings (in-person township officials with remote resident participants)

The scenario associated with this case focuses on a township supervisor named Mike. He wants the option to continue board meetings in person but the flexibility for the public to attend meetings virtually. His township has a good internet connection and believes a hybrid meeting option will increase public participation. This scenario represents some of the concerns voiced in both the UM CCC survey data and interviews conducted.

Recommendation: Zoom Pro Plan with additional hardware for onsite participants in Townships with adequate internet. FreeConferenceCall.com for Townships with poor internet.

Zoom System

Internet
An internet connection – broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE). Minimum bandwidth is 600kbps (up/down) and recommended is 1.5 Mbps (up/down).

Hardware
Zoom provides a list of supported USB devices that are compatible with Mac and Windows devices. Recommendations for webcams, conference room cameras, headsets, speakerphones, and microphones can be found here: Zoom Support

Acoustic and Audio Recommendations
During a hybrid meeting it is recommended that townships use an onsite speaker to broadcast any communication from virtual participants, with the option of an additional monitor and camera to display virtual and onsite participants. Also, the use of headsets are recommended for board members and an additional microphone for public commentary. Using Zoom, connect to your Zoom.us account with a laptop or tablet to transmit the feed of the video, microphone, and headsets to virtual participants.

For townships that prefer the use of a large monitor to allow participants to view an entire room, Zoom provides excellent resources for addressing audio concepts and optimizing a public space: Acoustics & Audio Concepts and Zoom Audio Guidelines. Additionally, hardware recommendations for small rooms (fit 2-7 people), standard conference rooms (fit 7-13 people), and large conference rooms (fits 9-19 people) are provided.

FreeConferenceCall.com System

Minimum System Requirements
FreeConferenceCall.com provides a list of minimum system requirements needed for both audio and video conferencing options, FreeConferenceCall.com System Requirements.

Hardware
Virtual participants are able to dial in using their personal phone or online via VoIP conference call. It is recommended that the following hardware is used: microphone, speaker(s), headsets, laptop or tablet (to monitor virtual participants).

Acoustic and Audio Recommendations
FreeConferenceCall.com provides a list of audio recommendations for teleconferencing, FreeConferenceCall.com Audio. During a hybrid meeting it is recommended that townships use an onsite speaker to broadcast any communication from virtual participants. Additionally, the use of headsets are recommended for board members and an additional microphone for public commentary. Using the FreeConferenceCall.com dashboard, connect to a VoIP conference call on a laptop or mobile device to transmit the feed of the microphone and headsets to virtual participants.

Appendix
# Appendix A: Competitive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Skype</th>
<th>Microsoft Teams</th>
<th>GoToMeeting</th>
<th>Zoom (Cisco Webex)</th>
<th>Facebook Live Stream</th>
<th>RingCentral</th>
<th>User Conference</th>
<th>FreeConferenceCall.com</th>
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<td>Dial-in Option</td>
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<tr>
<td>Force Mute</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakout Rooms</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>Chat Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Password-enabled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closed Captioning</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Messaging</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Poll</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Support</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document Sharing</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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## 10 Virtual Meeting Software Platforms Full View
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>RingCentral</th>
<th>UberConference</th>
<th>FreeConferenceCall.com</th>
<th>vastconference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost (per month)</td>
<td>Premium: $34.99  Ultimate: $49.99</td>
<td>Free: $0.00  Business: $15.00</td>
<td>Free: $0-$15</td>
<td>Standard: $15.99  Professional: $31.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Capacity</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>No Limit</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Capacity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 / account</td>
<td>1 / account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Limit</td>
<td>24hrs</td>
<td>24hrs</td>
<td>45 min/meet</td>
<td>5hrs/meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenshare</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dial-in Option</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Mute</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakout Rooms</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Room</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Password-enabled</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Captioning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Messaging</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Poll</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Sharing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: UM CCC Survey Question Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Nice to Have</th>
<th>Unnecessary</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>73.97%</td>
<td>18.72%</td>
<td>8.22%</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>162</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation/hosting</td>
<td>68.37%</td>
<td>26.98%</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public participation (public can give comments)</td>
<td>71.12%</td>
<td>26.29%</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected official communication (elected officials can interact)</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation/closed sessions (breakout rooms)</td>
<td>34.67%</td>
<td>36.44%</td>
<td>29.33%</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force mute audience</td>
<td>51.79%</td>
<td>34.82%</td>
<td>13.84%</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making/voting</td>
<td>75.11%</td>
<td>18.78%</td>
<td>6.11%</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>40.69%</td>
<td>15.15%</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and instructions</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
<td>46.90%</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech support</td>
<td>49.56%</td>
<td>40.79%</td>
<td>9.65%</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed captioning</td>
<td>25.55%</td>
<td>53.30%</td>
<td>21.59%</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other?</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>55.88%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Interview Affinity Diagram

Affinity Diagram Full View
## Virtual Meetings using Zoom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townships attempted 3 to 12 virtual meetings</th>
<th>Meetings have been both 100% virtual and hybrid</th>
<th>Meeting engagement increased, decreased, or stayed about the same during virtual meetings</th>
<th>Townships are happy with how zoom worked during virtual meetings</th>
<th>Townships opted for payed zoom plans to avoid restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-12 virtual meetings have been held - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>Virtual meeting were 100% virtual - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>more seasonal residents attend virtual meetings - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>Zoom worked excellent - Supervisor 2</td>
<td>Basic zoom plan was used at first but switched to pro plan for more time during meetings - Supervisor 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 virtual meetings held (once a month) - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>Zoom used for all virtual meetings - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>only 1/3 of meeting participants dialed-in while the rest used video - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>no complaints about virtual meetings - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>Purchased the Pro Zoom plan to avoid the 40 minute basic plan meeting time limit - Treasurer 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held 3 virtual meetings using Zoom with few being closed to the public - Clerk 1</td>
<td>Virtual meetings started 100% virtual before switching to a hybrid set up - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>Meeting attendance was the same virtually as it was in-person - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>$18/month Zoom subscription used, very affordable - Supervisor 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple meetings held using zoom - Supervisor 2</td>
<td>hybrid meetings meets everyone's needs better than exclusively virtual or in-person</td>
<td>Most people at least passively engaging (dailing in) - Clerk 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complications of Virtual Meetings

Interviewees have had struggles with technical aspects and connectivity while running virtual meetings.

- Background noise, sound and video has been problematic while running virtual meetings.
- Challenges with closed caption accuracy, and running meetings.
- Misuse of tech. that could be problematic to OMA Guidelines.

- Broadband/cell/cell issues cause participants to get dropped and rejoin meeting frequently - Supervisor 1
- Background noise did not work well due older computers without speakers (calling in via phone), reverberation due to multiple ppl being in the same room - Clerk 1
- Closed captioning not accurate, poor spelling (names) - third party recommended by zoom - Clerk 1
- There could be misuse of private chat features using zoom - Clerk 1

- Positive feedback for zoom except for technical glitches - Clerk 1
- Tech issues: sound and people freezing and having to come back into the meetings - Treasurer 1
- Managing various aspects of the meeting are challenging. Second host/facilitator needed - Supervisor 1
- Sometimes a negative that people have to identify themselves (name label) rather than attend (physical presence) - Supervisor 2

- No issues with zoom besides sound/connectivity issues - Supervisor 1
- No solution has been found for background noise/distractions are a problem during virtual meetings - Supervisor 1
- It’s challenging to get participant attention and participation for audio conferencing only - Supervisor 1

- Drawbacks of future virtual meetings: allowing ppl to speak up when necessary, moving frame or audio, no tech support - Clerk 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Issue/Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various features were utilized by interviewees and proven to be useful</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There hasn't been any difficulties with roll call during virtual meetings</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mute function was helpful and offered good control in virtual meetings</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of waiting rooms upon entering and hand raising was an effective way to moderate public participation</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakout rooms have the potential to be a good tool for closed sessions</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all interviewees have used closed captioning. However, they are expected to use finer in the future</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity knowledge that software might not have everything, but training would be beneficial to utilize what it has to offer</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Issue/Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoom has seamless recording built into software - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll call votes were fine - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most meeting participants used video with muted audio - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk moderates and runs the waiting room, watches for raised hands, takes roll call, mutes ppl - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakout rooms are critical for closed sessions - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed captioning through third party <strong>100/hr - Clerk 1</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need expense of getting board members laptops - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggestion can't be everything to everyone. Hopefully, Zoom will go the way of Quickbooks and increase cutouts and make more accessible to deaf people in a compatible with too many uncommon features - Supervisor 2</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll call votes are not an issue - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muting and waiting room feature offers good control/moderation - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring hand raising either through video or digital hand raising function can be tough to get used to but moderator help - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakout rooms could be a good tool for closed sessions - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited to try closed captioning, helpful for elderly people with hearing issues - Supervisor 2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to continue virtual meetings: provide more up-to-date computers for members - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for those who are uncomfortable with the new tech will be preferred - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moderator used muting, waiting room, recording and posted on youtube - Supervisor 2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of future virtual meetings. mute function, ppl are more respectful - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand raising for public comment worked well and is possible with audio only participants - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasn't used closed captioning but plans on it - Treasurer 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need camera to show the whole township board - Supervisor 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoom functions used screen sharing, chat function, link to join all helpful without being tech savvy - Supervisor 2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used waiting room to make entering/staring the meeting more orderly - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headphones and microphones can minimize reverberation - Clerk 1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the future

townships should be prepared to learn the practice of virtual meetings

allowing virtual access would create flexibility for members and public, better guidelines are needed in the future.

Not everyone is going to be on board with virtual meetings. However, virtual meetings is the future.

Having someone in charge of communication is a helpful tool for townships and will beneficial for virtual meetings and postings

Preparedness for virtual meetings: "be efficient, have clear properly-worded motions to vote on, leave a good record/legacy of actions" - Treasurer 1

Flexibility in Virtual meetings are good for bad weather days/ice/snow and pandemics - Treasurer 1

"Often ppl in government are "old-school" but we need to evolve with the times" - Treasurer 1

Each community is going to need a communications person - Treasurer 1

Need townships to practice preparedness for virtual meetings - Treasurer 1

"Gov and/or legislature allowing virtual was all the flexibility that was needed in OMA; should be permanent option - "you have to allow us to do business differently" - but only option, not requirement" - Supervisor 2

Thoughts on training: "Life is trial and error. We need to get more comfortable...this is the future" - Treasurer 1

Communications person was a great addition during the pandemic. Handled social media, getting information out and public is happy - Treasurer 1

board will go back to in-person. public may request virtual access but the board needs clear guidance from state -Supervisor 1
safety & security

One township had an issue with security, however doesn't want to limit public access with passwords so utilized other methods of identification.

The majority of interviewees had no issues with security or 'zoom bombing', zoom seems to be doing a good job updating security.

Zoom is a great way to keep community save during COVID-19.

Had one incident of a hacker that played child pornography - Treasurer 1

Experienced no issues with zoom bombing or attendees who aren't part of the community - Clerk 1

"We love zoom...it helps keep everyone safe during COVID-19 - Treasurer 1

Doesn't want to limit public participation with passwords but would be good to implement in the future - Treasurer 1

Zoom had issues, got too big too fast, but updated security quickly; haven't had problems beyond a normal public meeting - Supervisor 2

"Zoom keeps people safe - if someone is asymptomatic, you aren't chance-ing getting people sick" - Treasurer 1

Need to monitor sessions to watch for "bad actors/zoom bombers" - Treasurer 1

Haven't had any security issues but concerned about press reports on "Zoom Bombing" - Supervisor 1

"Meetings can get heated; worried about asymptomatic transmission through raised voices" - Treasurer 1

Made people identify themselves to attend virtual meetings to increase security - Treasurer 1
Thoughts & opinions

Some people are 'stuck in their ways' however, learning new tech is important in keeping up with the tech evolving in the world.

Offering virtual meetings offers more flexibility, it's already being utilized in other organizations and businesses.

It is important to allow other avenues for public participation such as the use of virtual meetings.

"Some people are just going to be stuck in their ways" - Treasurer 1
"if businesses can do virtual meetings, governments can" - Treasurer 1
"virtual meetings would be preferred even if in-person allowed again...more accessible for board members, staff, and residents" - Treasurer 1

"Society has evolved with tech so much, we not only rely on it but can conduct business better with it" - Supervisor 2
"elected officials have to evolve to serve their communities, no more "butts in chairs" - Treasurer 1
important to allow live participation of public and offer ways for board members traveling or with other obligations/issues to still participate (military/National Guard) - Supervisor 2

it's a challenge to learn/use different programs for different meetings - Supervisor 1
"virtual meeting option offers more ways to conduct business when life happens" - Supervisor 2
Try to be creative to reach everyone, but focus on majority - majority can be reached with virtual meetings, more than with in-person; more information & accessibility is better - Supervisor 2

board is older and prefers in person but they are getting used to this convenience - Supervisor 2
Appendix D: Personas

Alexia Reulier

Bio
Alexia is the township clerk for a large community. She strives to keep the public informed and connected about upcoming board meetings.

Goals · Interest
- Keeping the public informed about happenings in the township
- To have a safe place for board meetings
- Public engagement and participation for upcoming board meetings

Pain Points · Concerns
- Accessibility of virtual board meetings to the public
- Limiting the contact in the community to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 the township
- "Zoom Bombing" and internet trolls

Scenario
Alexia wants to keep her community safe and well informed during COVID-19. Her township has good internet connection, but is concerned about "zoom bombing"

Motivations
- Community
- Information
- Curiosity
- Entertainment
- Technology

Personality
- Introvert
- Extrovert
- Analytical
- Creative
- Loyal
- Fickle
- Passive
- Active

Brands
- Apple
- Netflix
- Amazon
Dora Appleton

Bio
Dora is the treasurer of a smaller community where many of its members are part-time residence. She is in charge of running and informing the public of board meetings.

Goals · Interest
- The safety and security of community
- Wants to be able to better involve out of town community members
- Wants to continue to run board meetings with the public's involvement
- The option to have hybrid board meetings in the future

Pain Points · Concerns
- The stay at home order for COVID-19 has made public involvement in board meetings difficult
- Not everyone has stable internet connection
- Limited experience with virtual meeting software
- Background noises or other sound issues that occur in virtual meetings

Scenario
Dora wants to keep her community safe during COVID-19. Her township has poor internet connection and needs a platform in order to run virtual meetings.

Motivations
- Community
- Information
- Curiosity
- Entertainment
- Technology

Personality
- Introvert
- Analytical
- Loyal
- Passive
- Extrovert
- Creative
- Fickle
- Active

Brands
- Volvo
- Facebook
- WWF
- Campbells
Mike Davidson

Bio
Mike is the township supervisor of mid-sized township. There is usually a lower amount of public participation in board meetings, public expressed interest in a virtual platform.

Goals · Interest
- Control and freedom to hold board meetings as committee sees fit
- The option to hold board meetings with virtual access during the pandemic
- Flexibility of rules to allow hybrid board meetings in the future

Pain Points · Concerns
- Regulations that restrict the committees ability to make independent decisions for their community
- Outdated policies and procedures
- Lack of flexibility of current policies and procedures

Scenario
Mike's community has good internet and wants the option to hold hybrid board meeting sessions to increase public participation in the future.

Motivations
- Community
- Information
- Curiosity
- Entertainment
- Technology

Personality
- Introvert
- Analytical
- Loyalty
- Passive
- Extrovert
- Creative
- Fickle
- Active

Brands
- American Express
- Mercedes-Benz
- Microsoft