

Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

# Video Conferencing & Teleconferencing Policy

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to allow a member of Council or municipal Staff to participate in council or committee meetings by means of a communication facility including via telephone/ tele-conference or an internet-based video conferencing system when they are unable to attend in person because of a short-term illness or other temporary condition that prevents them from attending the meeting. The policy may not be used to facilitate a scheduled extended leave from the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's during vacations or unexcused leaves of absence.

A secondary purpose of the Policy is to provide a process to permit electronic meetings during pandemics, other public health crises or emergencies.

**Procedures:**

- A council or committee meeting may employ the use of communication facilities, if a member of Council or Staff is unable to attend, if:
  - proper notice has been given of the meeting whether the meeting is a regular meeting of council or not;
  - for a public meeting, the facilities enable all the public to watch or listen to the meeting at a place specified in the meeting notice;
  - The individual who participates in a meeting by use of a communication facility is considered present at the meeting and will be recorded as in attendance.
- An in-camera council or committee meeting may not employ the use of communication facilities.
- If technological problems prevent participation, the individual shall be marked as absent.
- If connection is lost during the meeting and cannot be reconnected, the minutes shall reflect when the individual left the meeting.
- Agenda packages will be made accessible to participating meeting members through electronic means.
- A maximum of two councillors may attend a meeting by use of communication facilities.
- A quorum for the meeting must be met by the councillors physically present at the meeting.

- Except for cause due to illness or emergency, no Councillor shall attend more than two meetings through virtual means within a one year period (Fiscal Year).
- A Councillor who wishes to participate in a meeting by means of a communication facility shall notify the Chief Administrative Officer as soon as reasonably possible. Except in a declared emergency, a Councillor shall provide such notice no less than two days before the meeting in question.
- Communication facilities shall permit participants in the meeting to hear and be heard by all other participants in the meeting.
- The communication facilities shall be provided in such a way that the rules governing conflict of interest of members are complied with.
- During meetings that are closed to the public, individuals who are participating in the meeting through the use of communication facilities will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Individuals participating through the use of communication facilities shall notify the Chair of their departure (either temporary or permanent) from the meeting, before absenting themselves.
- A Councillor who is participating in a meeting by means of a communication facility must place all their votes verbally.
- A Councillor must be physically present at a meeting to be sworn in.
- Notwithstanding any other provision or provisions of this Policy, meetings of Council and Municipal Committees, including annual general meetings and *in camera* meetings, may be held by teleconference or videoconference or other electronic means when the Warden determines there to be a pandemic, other public health crisis or emergency which warrants such meeting to be held electronically, provided that for any meeting required to be an open meeting, a recording of the meeting is posted to the Municipality's website within a reasonable period of time following the meeting to ensure openness and transparency.

*M. Jordan*

*March 18, 2020*

Municipal Clerk

Date

Approved April 8, 2019  
Amended: March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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