

# **TOWN OF HOPE**

## **Remote Participation Policy**

### **Purpose**

It is the policy of the Town of Hope, under limited circumstances (see Conditions), to allow elected members of the Select Board and the general public to participate in public meetings as defined by 1 M.R.S. § 403-A by remote means including telephonic and video conferencing capabilities or other similar means.

### **Conditions**

Members of the Select Board are expected to be physically present for public proceedings except when being physically present is not practicable. Circumstances in which physical presence for one or more members is not practicable shall include:

1. The existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the Select Board to meet by remote methods.
2. Illness, medical circumstances (documented by a physician), other physical condition or temporary absence from the jurisdiction of the Select Board that causes a member of the Select Board to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person at the location in the notice provided by Title 1 § 406 M.R.S.
3. The area of the Select Board's jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel.

### **Requirements**

1. If a public body meets remotely, or if any member of the Select Board or Committee participates remotely, members of the public will be provided the ability to participate by remote methods and the Town will provide conference call and/or video connection web links to any member of the public that wishes to participate by remote methods.
2. If public input is allowed at any meeting where remote participation is allowed, the Town will provide an effective means of communication between the members of the body and the public.
3. All notices of proceedings will be advertised by being posted on the Town of Hope's website and bulletin board and will be distributed via mass email distribution to those who have signed up for the service. The notice will include the means by which members of the public may access the proceeding using remote methods. The notice will

also identify where the remaining Select Board members will be meeting in person and this location will be available for members of the public to attend in person as well.

4. A member of the Select Board who participates in a public proceeding by remote methods in accordance with this policy is present for purposes of a quorum and voting.
5. All votes taken during a public proceeding using remote methods must be taken by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, and heard if using only audio technology, by other members of the public body and the public.
6. Documents and other materials considered by the Select Board will be made available electronically on the Town of Hope's website for members of the public to have access to prior to the proceedings whether attending remotely or in person.
7. Remote participation by the public may be provided/offered by the Town as a matter of customer service even if not required by this policy.
8. If remote participation is required by this policy, and in the event of a "technology error" and a remote connection is lost for more than fifteen (15) consecutive minutes without being restored, the meeting is to be considered automatically adjourned. A new meeting with proper notice will be required. If remote participation is not required because all members of the body are physically present and the meeting is open to the public, the meeting may continue even if remote access is lost for fifteen consecutive minutes or more.
9. Other public Boards and Committees of the Town are subject to this same policy with prior consultation with the Town Administrator.
10. Town meetings and school budget meetings may not be conducted using remote methods. Remote access such as livestreaming and/or recordings are permitted, but official business must be conducted in person.

**Effective Date**

The policy will be effective upon its adoption by the Hope Select Board.

*Adopted on August 10, 2021 by the Hope Select Board.*