



## Administrative Policy # 2020-04

### Council Video Conferencing/Teleconferencing Policy

#### **Enabling Legislation:**

Under the authority of the Municipal Government Act;

- 23 (1) The council may make policies
- (a) respecting the date, hour and place of the meetings of the council and the notice to be given for them;
  - (b) regulating its own proceedings and preserving order at meetings of the council;

#### **Policy Statement:**

1. It is the policy of the Town of Digby to allow Councillors to participate in meetings of Council and its Standing Committees by video conferencing or teleconferencing (electronic means) in accordance with the terms of this policy.
2. The procedural requirements in this Policy are intended to complement and supplement, and not to replace, the requirements contained in
  - a. the Municipal Government Act; and
  - b. the Town of Digby's Council Meetings and Proceedings Policy

#### **Definitions:**

3. In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires,
  - a. **Electronic means:** electronic means shall include
    1. Teleconferencing or
    2. Video conferencing (where available)

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- b. **Video conference:** a conference in which participants in different locations are able to communicate with each other in sound and vision.
- c. **Teleconference:** a conference with participants in different locations link by telecommunication devices.
- d. **Council member:** means Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor
- e. **Council:** means the Council of the Town of Digby
- f. **Meeting:** means a regular or special meeting of Council or meeting of a standing Committee of Council.
- g. **Clerk:** means the Chief Administrative Officer(CAO) of the Town of Digby

### **All Council members attend by videoconference**

- 4. The Clerk may require all Council members to appear at a meeting by videoconference if each Council member and the Town of Digby have videoconferencing equipment available that will:
  - a. enable each Council member to see and hear every other Council member participate in the meeting by videoconference.
- 5. A meeting by videoconference as provided for in section 4 are open public meetings; to ensure transparency one or more of the following shall be done:
  - b. Minutes of the meeting shall be posted on the Town Website 24 hours after the meeting;
  - c. the meetings shall be video recorded and uploaded to the internet
  - d. the meeting shall be live streamed on the internet.

### **One or more Council members attend by electronic means**

- 6. Except as provided in section 4, Council members must attend Council meetings in person or, if approved by the Clerk pursuant to section 7, one or more Council members may appear at a meeting by electronic means.

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7. Subject to the other provisions of this Policy, the Clerk shall grant permission to a Council member to participate in a meeting, or part of a meeting by electronic means if:
  - a. Two (2) days prior to the meeting, the Council member provides written notice to the Clerk indicating that the Council member wishes to attend the meeting by electronic means;
  - b. the Council member has not participated in more than two (2) meetings by electronic means in the preceding twelve (12) months in addition to meetings in which all Council members participated by videoconference;
  - c. Council has the right to grant an exception to section 7 (b) to a Council member due to illness or injury that would prevent the Council member from attending the meeting in person.
  - d. the Council member has electronic equipment available that will:
    - i. enable the public to see and/or hear the Council member participate in the meeting by electronic means; and
    - ii. enable the Council member to see and/or hear each of the Council members who are attending the Council Meeting by electronic means or in person.
  - e. the Town of Digby has electronic equipment available that will:
    - i. enable the public to see and/or hear the Council member participating in the meeting by electronic means;
    - ii. enable the Council member to see and/or hear each of the Council members who are attending the Council Meeting by electronic means or in person; and
    - iii. enable **every** Council member who is attending the meeting by electronic means or in person to see and/or hear all other Council members who are attending the meeting by electronic means or in person.

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8. Any Council member participating by electronic means in a meeting shall be deemed to be:
  - a. present at those parts of the meeting in which a Council member is permitted to participate by electronic means under this Policy; and
  - b. absent for any parts of the meeting in which a Council member is not permitted to participate by electronic means under this Policy.
9. The Clerk shall not grant permission to a Council member to participate by electronic means in any of the following:
  - a. any part of a meeting during which the issue under discussion will be decided by a vote held by secret ballot;
  - b. a vote held by secret ballot.
10. Councillors participating in a meeting by electronic means shall notify the Chair of their departure (either temporary or permanent) from the meeting, before absenting themselves.

### **Technological problems - failure to connect or disconnection**

11. If technological problems prevent a Council member from participating in a meeting prior to the meeting commencing, the Council member shall be marked absent from the meeting.
12. If a Council member becomes disconnected from the meeting due to technical problems or other reasons, the minutes shall reflect that the Council member left the meeting at the time of the disconnection.
13. In the event that a meeting that is being accessed electronically is encountering interference and/or disruption by electronic participants, the Chair shall warn the participants the first time, advise them a second time that if any further disturbance/interference continues, and on further disturbance/interference, direct the site monitor to shut off the electronic access.

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**In Camera sessions:**

- 14. Meetings that are held In Camera:
  - a. Council members who are participating in a meeting through electronic means will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
  - b. Are not subject to Section 5.

**Repeal:**

- 15. This policy replaces and repeals Video Conferencing/ Teleconferencing Policy # 2017-004

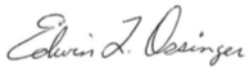
**Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book**

**Date of Notice:**            **December 21, 2020**

**Date of adoption:**        **January 4, 2021**

**Policy effective date:**   **January 4, 2021**

I certify that this **Council Video Conferencing/Teleconferencing Policy** was adopted by Council as indicated above.



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Clerk

**January 5, 2021**

Date