



## **REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY**

### **KNOX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

In accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 403-B, and after public notice and hearing, the Knox County Commissioners adopt this “Remote Participation Policy” (the “Policy”) to govern the participation, by remote methods, of members of this public body and of the public in the public proceedings, or public meetings, of this public body.

The Knox County Commissioners may allow members of this public body to participate in a public meeting using remote methods only under the following conditions.

- A. “Remote methods” of participation means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. Public meetings by remote methods of participation may not be conducted by text-only means such as e-mail, text messages, or chat functions.
- B. Members of this public body are expected to be physically present for public meetings except when being physically present is not practicable, including the following circumstances:
1. The existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the public body to meet by remote methods;
  2. Illness, other physical condition or temporary absence from Knox County that causes a member of this public body to face significant difficulties traveling to the publicly noticed meeting location and attending the meeting in person; and
  3. The area of the public body’s jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel, including but not limited to islands not connected by bridges.

The chair or presiding officer of the public body, in consultation with other members if appropriate and possible, will make a determination that remote methods of participation are necessary in as timely a manner as possible under the circumstances. A member of the public body who is unable to attend a meeting in person will notify the chair or presiding officer of the public body as far in advance as possible.

- C. The public shall be provided a meaningful opportunity to attend by remote methods when any member or members of the public body participate by remote methods and reasonable accommodations must be provided when necessary to provide access to individuals with disabilities.
- D. If the public body allows or is required to provide an opportunity for public input during the meeting, an effective means of communication between the members of the public body and the public must be provided.

E. Notice of all public meetings must be provided in accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 406 and any applicable statute, policy, regulation, or bylaw. When the public may attend by remote methods, notice must include the means by which members of the public may access the public meeting using remote methods and will provide a method for disabled persons to request necessary reasonable accommodation to access the public meeting. The notice must also identify a location where the public may attend the meeting in person. The public body will not limit public attendance solely to remote methods except in the case of the existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the public body to meet using remote methods of attendance.

F. A member of the public body who participates in a public meeting remotely will be considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

G. All votes taken during a public meeting using remote methods must be taken by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, or heard if using audio technology only, by other members of the public body and the public.

H. The public body must make all documents and other materials considered by the public body at the meeting available, electronically or otherwise, to the public who attend by remote methods to the same extent customarily available to the public who attend in person, provided no additional costs are incurred by the public body. Therefore, last minute submission of documents and other materials to the public body after the deadline for submission of these in advance of each meeting is prohibited. The deadline for submission to the Knox County Administrator's office of documents and other materials to be considered by the Knox County Commissioners at the public meeting is 10:00 am on the Wednesday of the week prior to that public meeting.

This Policy will remain in force indefinitely unless amended or rescinded.

Dated: July 13, 2021

Signed:

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Richard L. Parent, Jr., Chair

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Dorothy G. Meriwether, Commissioner

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Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner