



Guidelines for Remote Participation

Purpose:

Initially used as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote participation has become a convenient and preferred method for various Committees in the Town of Waldoboro to continue their progress. This method has provided members of the public opportunities to ask questions and view the meetings live without having to travel a significant distance. All work done by Committees is important for the growth of Waldoboro, which is why it is equally important that multiple options for communication are available, so work is not delayed due to in-person meetings becoming an issue.

As remote participation becomes a standard practice in a post-COVID Maine, it is important to improve this technique by minimizing common issues. This document aims to provide guidance for residents on how they should conduct themselves if they choose to attend public meetings remotely.

What is “Remote Participation in a Public Meeting?”

Physical presence at public meetings used to be a State of Maine requirement until an emergency declaration suspended it due to COVID-19, permitting remote participation as an option. People attend and participate in public meetings remotely using the Town’s selected application. Remote participation may involve using a mobile phone, a landline, or a computer to join a public meeting.

How does the Town of Waldoboro Permit Remote Participation?

For public meetings, Waldoboro’s town office uses the Zoom.us application. You do not need to have a Zoom account to access a meeting, just a link to join the meeting and the willingness to identify yourself when you join. The link used for the Waldoboro meetings are used for all public meetings, so there is no need to find a new link for every meeting.

Follow these steps to join a public meeting in Waldoboro using Zoom.us:

1. Go to the Town of Waldoboro Website: www.waldoboromaine.org
2. Click on the “Stay Connected” tab found at the top of the screen
3. Click on the highlighted link to automatically begin your connection, or click the link below (<https://zoom.us/j/99385905635?pwd=TEwzU1YySlo1aFo4b1h3eDE4a1dGQT09>)

4. You will be asked to connect your audio and visual to the meeting. Confirm to be let in.
5. Wait until the host of the meeting grants access.
6. You are in the meeting.

If you are unable to launch the Zoom application nor downloaded the application prior to the meeting, please follow steps 1-3 then proceed with the alternative steps below:

- 4a. When you are taken to a new screen that prompts to launch the Zoom meeting, there is an option two lines below that will offer you to launch the Zoom meeting from your web browser (note: this does not work for all web browsers). Click “Launch from your web browser”.
- 5a. Insert your name when prompted.
- 6a. Wait until the host of the meeting grants access.
- 7a. You are in the meeting

If you do not have a stable internet connection, please use the phone information below:

1. Dial 1 929 205 6099
2. Provide the following Meeting ID and passcode information when prompted.

Meeting ID: 993 8590 5635

Passcode: 1600

3. Wait for the host to let you in the meeting.
4. You are in the meeting.

When the meeting is over, the host of the Zoom meeting will close the meeting room. If you wish to leave early, the “Leave Meeting” option is located at the bottom right of your window if you are on the computer. Those who call in leave the meeting by hanging up their phones.

Is there another way to watch or participate remotely without using Zoom.us?

The Town of Waldoboro has their own Youtube channel where we livestream meetings and uploads recordings of previously held meetings. Simply type “Town of Waldoboro Youtube” in the search bar of your favorite browser to find a link to Waldoboro’s Youtube channel.

If you have an account with Google or Youtube, you can subscribe to Waldoboro’s Youtube channel. By clicking on the bell icon in the upper righthand corner of Waldoboro Youtube’s home page, you can receive notifications whenever a meeting is being held in real time. During a livestream, you can type in the chat box if you have questions or comments that you would like the public meeting to address, but you must be logged in to your Youtube account.

What should I do if I am participating remotely?

If you plan to attend or participate remotely via Zoom, please make sure you have a strong internet connection before joining the meeting or a stable phone connection if you are calling in. When you join, you will be placed in a waiting room until the host grants you permission to “join” the meeting as a member of the public audience. Audience members are asked to mute their microphones and to have their cameras off until the Chair of the Committee or Board asks for questions or comments from the public. Muting microphones and turning off cameras eliminate background noise and visuals that could distract other participants or interrupt the meeting. (Yes, make sure your pet’s needs have been addressed before you join the meeting!) All Committees and Boards provide opportunities for citizens’ comments. At that point in the meeting unmute your microphone and turn on your camera so the Committee or Board can see your raised hand and recognize you. When you speak, please provide your name and street address so your comments or questions may be recorded in the official minutes. If a Committee or Board is not giving opportunities for attendee questions or comments, unmute yourself and interject during the meeting to state that you would like to speak.

Because meetings are public, you may record them if you wish, but the Town is not responsible for your copy of the recording since the Town is focused on their own version, which it uploads to Youtube following the meeting. Since the Town records each Committee meeting for the public, make sure you are aware of your surroundings, so your camera does not inadvertently violate your privacy.

You should always treat your microphone and camera on until the meeting is over.

I am a member of a Town Committee or Board. How do I Interact as a remote participant?

Committee members participating remotely should enter the Zoom meeting room at least ten (10) minutes before the meeting starts to make sure they have no technical issues. Because Committee members are serving the Town of Waldoboro, they should be visible throughout the meeting if technology permits. If there is an issue that prevents a visual appearance, please state that at the beginning of the meeting for the public record. Committee or Board members may mute themselves until they are called upon, need to ask a question, make a point, or vote on a motion.

Committee and Board members participating remotely should keep in mind that not being physically present during a meeting makes their presence less spontaneous, especially when someone is attending the meeting to make a presentation. While remote participation may be more convenient, Committee and Board members should try to be physically present unless they are impeded by adverse weather or road conditions, a suspected contagious illness, surgical recovery, or work-related conflicts.

For further questions, please contact the Director of Planning & Development at:

planning@waldoboromaine.org or 207-832-5369 (extension 4)