



**MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF RICHMOND**  
**Virtual Meetings Policy**

**Policy Review Notification:**

**Policy Review Date: March 21, 2022**

**Approved by Council: April 25, 2022**

**I certify this to be a true copy of the Virtual Meetings Policy as adopted by the Municipal Council of Richmond County at a Public Meeting held April 25, 2022.**

**Yvonne Boudreau**  
**Municipal Clerk**

**1. Purpose**

To ensure that Council members and Committee members can fully participate in meetings of Council, Committees of Council, and in public hearings by videoconference when it is deemed necessary, and that members of the public are able to see and listen to the proceedings electronically as they are occurring.

**2. Scope**

This Policy applies to all meetings of Council, Committees of Council and all public hearings.

**3. Policy Statements**

3.1 The procedural requirements in this Policy are intended to complement and supplement, and not to replace, the requirements contained in:

3.1.1 The *Municipal Government Act*, 1998, c. 18, s. 1;

3.1.2 The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, R.S., c. 299, s. 1;

3.2 Participation in a Meeting by telephone is not permitted as the public and other Meeting participants are unable to see the person phoning into the Meeting.

3.3 A member of Council or a Committee, participating in a Meeting by Videoconference, is deemed to be present at the Meeting.

3.4 A Council Meeting or Committee Meeting may be conducted by electronic means pursuant to s. 19A (1) of the *Municipal Government Act*.

### 3.5 Closed Session

3.5.1 If Council or the Committee must meet in closed session pursuant to s.22 of the *Municipal Government Act*,

3.5.1.1 The transmission of audio and video signals of the Meeting to the public: will cease until the closed session is concluded; and

3.5.1.2 During the closed session, all members of Council or the Committee will continue to be able to see, hear and speak with each other whether they are participating in-person or by Videoconference. The person(s) attending virtually shall not permit any other person(s) to hear or observe such person's video or audio feed.

### 3.6 Conflict of Interest

3.6.1 Discussion of Conflict of Interest in Open Session

3.6.1.1 Should a member of Council or a Committee participating in a Meeting by Videoconference declare a Conflict of Interest regarding a matter under discussion in Open Session, the Chair shall ensure that the member's microphone is muted and their webcam is turned off until after discussion of the matter has concluded and, if applicable, a motion on the matter has been voted on.

3.6.1.2 The member whose participation in the Meeting has been suspended because of the declaration of a Conflict of Interest may continue to observe the Meeting on the Videoconference feed until discussion and, if applicable, voting on the motion has concluded. The Chair will then permit the member to re-join the Meeting by allowing the member to unmute their microphone and turn on their webcam.

3.6.1.3 The Clerk/Committee Recorder shall record the member who declared a Conflict of Interest as being absent during the time their microphone and webcam were turned off, and as being present at the time their microphone and webcam were turned back on.

### 3.7 Discussion of Conflict of Interest in Closed Session

3.7.1.1 Should a member of Council or a Committee participating in a Meeting by Videoconference declare a Conflict of Interest regarding a matter under discussion in Closed Session, the Chair shall ensure that the member leaves the Videoconference so they are unable to see or hear the Meeting.

3.7.1.2 Once discussion of the matter has concluded the Chair will notify the member by email or by other acceptable means that they may re-join the Meeting by Videoconference.

3.7.1.3 The Clerk/Committee Recorder shall record the member who declared a Conflict of Interest as being absent during the time they left the Videoconference, and as being present at the time they returned to the Videoconference.

### 3.8 Public Participation

3.8.1 The Chair will only permit the member of the public to unmute and turn on video in the Meeting by Videoconference during a specified Question Period as outlined in the agenda and will mute them and turn off video once they have finished speaking and Council or Committee members have concluded comments and questions directed to the member of the public.

### 3.9 Technological problems, Failure to Connect or Disconnection, and Temporary Absence from a Meeting

3.9.1 If technological problems prevent a Council or Committee member from participating in a Meeting prior to the Meeting commencing, the Council or Committee member shall be marked absent from the Meeting.

3.9.2 If the technological problems are resolved during the course of the Meeting allowing the Council or Committee member to join the Meeting, the minutes shall reflect that the Council or Committee member joined the Meeting at the time of connection.

3.9.3 If a Council or Committee member becomes disconnected from the Meeting due to technical problems or other reasons, the minutes shall reflect that the Council or Committee member left the Meeting at the time of the disconnection.

3.9.4 If a Council or Committee member must temporarily leave the meeting and turn off their webcam and/or microphone, the member will advise the Clerk/Committee Recorder of the need to do so using the direct electronic "chat" messaging feature of the Videoconference platform, and the Clerk/Committee Recorder will note the time the member left the meeting. The member will advise the Clerk/Committee Recorder of when they have returned to the meeting using the same feature, and the Clerk/Committee Recorder will note the time the member returned to the meeting. If the absence exceeds five (5) minutes, or if a vote is held during the absence, the absence will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.

## 4. Responsibilities

4.1 Council will:

4.1.1 Ensure that the Municipality has a current and comprehensive policy for conducting Council and Committee Meetings by Videoconference; and

4.1.2 Review and amend this Policy as required.

4.2 The Chief Administrative Officer or designate will:

4.2.1 Implement and administer this Policy;

4.2.2 Ensure staff is advised of this Policy;

4.2.3 Identify and propose revisions to this Policy; and

4.2.4 Identify improvements to Videoconference technology which would facilitate the administration of this Policy.

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Notice Given:		March 21, 2022
Motion to Adopt:		April 25, 2022
Version Number	Amendment Description	Council Approval Date
1	Adoption	April 25, 2022