

Procedures for Member Videoconferencing Pursuant to Public Officers Law § 103-a

In compliance with Public Officers Law (POL)§ 103-a(2)(a), the Town Board of the Town of Dickinson, following a public hearing, authorized by resolution on July 11, 2022 the use of videoconferencing as described in POL§ 103-a.

The following procedures are hereby established to satisfy the requirement of POL§ 103-a(2)(b) that any public body which in its discretion wishes to permit its members to participate in meetings by videoconferencing from private locations - under extraordinary circumstances - must establish written procedures governing member and public attendance.

1. Board members shall be physically present at any meeting of the Town of Dickinson unless such member is unable to be physically present at one of the designated public meeting locations due to extraordinary circumstances.
2. For purposes of these procedures, the term "extraordinary circumstances" includes disability, illness, caregiving responsibilities, or any other significant or unexpected factor or event which precludes the member's physical attendance at such meeting.
3. If a member is unable to be physically present at one of the designated public meeting locations and wishes to participate by videoconferencing from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances, the member must notify the Supervisor or Chairperson no later than four business days prior to the scheduled meeting in order for proper notice to the public to be given. If extraordinary circumstances present themselves on an emergent basis within four days of a meeting, the Board shall update its notice as soon as practicable to include that information. If it is not practicable for the Board to update its notice, the Board may reschedule its meeting.
4. If there is a quorum of members participating at a physical location(s) open to the public, the Board may properly convene a meeting. A member who is participating from a remote location that is not open to in-person physical attendance by the public *shall not* count toward a quorum of the Board but may participate and vote if there is a quorum of members at a physical location(s) open to the public. When a quorum is not available, but out of town presenters are present for the announced meeting, the Supervisor or Chairperson shall have the option to continue as an informational session to allow presentations to the in-person and virtual attending Board members. Board members can ask questions for clarification, but no official action can be taken.
5. Except in the case of executive sessions conducted pursuant to POL§ 105, the Board shall ensure that its members can be heard, seen, and identified while the meeting is being conducted, including but not limited to any motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally discussed or voted upon. This shall include the use of first and last name placards physically placed in front of the members or, for members participating by videoconferencing from private locations due to extraordinary circumstances, such members must ensure that their full first and last name appears on their videoconferencing screen.
6. The minutes of the meetings involving videoconferencing based on extraordinary circumstances pursuant to POL§ 103-a shall include which, if any, members participated by videoconferencing from a private location due to such extraordinary circumstances.

7. The public notice for the meeting shall inform the public: (i) that extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing will (or may) be used, (ii) where the public can view and/or participate in such meeting, (iii) where required documents and records will be posted or available, and (iv) the physical location(s) for the meeting where the public can attend.
8. The Board shall provide that each open portion of any meeting conducted using extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing shall be recorded and such recordings posted or linked on the Town of Dickinson website within five business days following the meeting, and shall remain so available for a minimum of five years thereafter. Such recordings shall be transcribed upon request.
9. If members of the Board are authorized to participate by videoconferencing from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances, the Board shall provide the opportunity for members of the public to view such meeting by video, and to participate in proceedings by videoconference in real time where public comment or participation is authorized. The Board shall ensure that where extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing is used, it authorizes the same public participation or testimony as in-person participation or testimony.
10. Open meetings of the Board conducted using extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing pursuant to the provisions of POL§ 103-a shall be broadcast pursuant to the requirements of POL§ 103(f) and shall utilize technology to permit access by members of the public with disabilities consistent with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, and corresponding guidelines. For the purposes of this guideline, "disability" shall have the meaning defined in Executive Law§ 292.
11. The in-person participation requirements of POL§ 103-a(2)(c) shall not apply during a [state disaster emergency declared by the governor pursuant to Executive Law§ 28 or a local state of emergency proclaimed by the chief executive of a county, city, village or town pursuant to § 24 of the Executive Law] if the Board determines that the circumstances necessitating the emergency declaration would affect or impair the ability of the Board to hold an in- person meeting.
12. These procedures shall be conspicuously posted on the Town of Dickinson website.