_____ — Policy on Remote Participation in Public Proceedings

Adopted by: _____ (name of public body) **On:** _____
After public notice given on: _____ **and a public hearing held on:** _____
Authority: 1 M.R.S. § 403-B

1. Purpose

This policy sets the conditions under which members of the _____ and members of the public may take part in the body's public proceedings by remote methods.

2. Remote methods

"Remote methods" means telephone or video technology that allows simultaneous reception of information, and other means when needed to provide a reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. Proceedings will not be conducted by email, text message, chat or other text-only means.

3. When members may participate remotely

Members are expected to attend in person. A member may participate remotely when _____ (for example: illness, travel, caregiving, weather, or another reason the chair accepts). The member tells the chair or clerk by _____ before the meeting when possible.

4. Public access

- When any member participates remotely, members of the public will have a meaningful opportunity to attend by remote methods.
- If public comment is allowed or required, the body will provide an effective way for remote attendees to communicate with members.
- Documents and other materials considered by the body will be made available to remote attendees to the same extent they are to people attending in person, as long as this adds no cost.
- Members of the public may record the proceeding on the same platform when the platform allows it, it adds no cost and it does not disrupt the meeting.

5. Notice

Notice will be given under 1 M.R.S. § 406. When the public may attend remotely, the notice will include how to join (_____) and an in-person location: _____. The body will limit public attendance to remote methods only in an emergency or urgent situation that requires it.

6. Quorum and voting

A member participating remotely is present for quorum and voting. Every vote taken while any member participates remotely is by roll call that can be seen and heard (video) or heard (audio) by the other members and the public.

7. Executive sessions

When the body goes into executive session for a purpose allowed by 1 M.R.S. § 405, remote members stay connected only on a line or meeting room the public cannot hear, and leave it when the session ends.

8. Technical problems

If the connection to a remote member is lost, the meeting continues if a quorum remains. If remote public access is lost, the chair will _____ (for example: recess until restored, or continue and post the recording).

9. Review

The body will review this policy by _____.

Attested by (secretary / clerk): _____ **Date:** _____

State notes

- **Maine:** 1 M.R.S. § 403-B: a body may allow remote participation only after adopting a written policy after notice and hearing. Text-only means (email, text, chat) are not allowed. When members join remotely, the public must have a meaningful way to attend remotely too; the notice gives the remote access and an in-person location; remote members count for quorum and voting; every vote is by roll call. A policy adopted by the municipal officers generally covers the town's other boards unless they are authorized to adopt their own (§ 403-B(2-A)).
- **New Hampshire:** RSA 91-A:2, III works differently: a member may join remotely only when attending in person is not reasonably practical, and the reason goes in the minutes. Except in an emergency (declared by the chair, with the facts in the minutes), a quorum must be physically present at the noticed location. Remote members must be audible to the public there, say who is in the room with them, and all votes are by roll call.
- **Massachusetts:** c. 30A § 20(d) and the Attorney General's regulations govern remote participation by members. Temporary provisions extended by St. 2025, c. 2 allow fully remote or hybrid meetings with alternative public access through June 30, 2027 — check the AG's Open Meeting Law guidance before you adopt or rely on a policy.

Sources

- 1 M.R.S. § 403-B (remote participation in public proceedings) — https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/1/title1sec403-B.html
- 1 M.R.S. § 406 (public notice) — https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/1/title1sec406.html
- 1 M.R.S. § 405 (executive sessions) — https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/1/title1sec405.html
- RSA 91-A:2 (meetings open to the public; notice; minutes) — https://www.gc.nh.gov/rsa/html/VI/91-A/91-A-2.htm
- M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20 (open meetings; 48-hour notice) — https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter30A/Section20
- St. 2025, c. 2 (extends remote and hybrid meeting provisions to June 30, 2027) — https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2025/Chapter2
- MA AGO: The Open Meeting Law — https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law

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