



PUBLIC MEETING OPTIONS IN A COVID-19 WORLD

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, each community is looking to provide safe public meetings, while ensuring public participation and meeting all state requirements. No changes have been made to the minimum requirements for **Public Notices** (see page 5-6*), but additional efforts could be made on your website, social media, etc. to encourage participation. As for **Public Meetings**, there are a variety of options to consider depending on the type of meeting (e.g. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.) and the resources available in each community. Please note that this list is not all inclusive; however, it does provide options that allow for transparency and public engagement.

In Person Options

- Hold meeting inside and ensure that there is at a minimum of 6 feet between each person
- Hold meeting outside and ensure that there is at a minimum of 6 feet between each person

If the minimum distance of six feet cannot be maintained, then the local government location may only have a maximum of 10 people present at a time.

Conference Call Options (Audio ONLY)

- Contact your telephone provider to see if they offer any options
- GoToMeeting – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [GoToMeeting](#)
- RingCentral – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [RingCentral](#)

Free Online Options (Audio and Video)

- Facebook Live – To learn more about streaming, visit [Facebook](#)
- FreeConferenceCall.com – To learn more, visit [FreeConferenceCall.com](#)
- Google Meet – To learn more, visit [Google Meet](#)
- YouTube Live – To learn more about streaming, visit [YouTube](#)

Host Membership Online Options (Audio and Video)

- Adobe Connect – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [Adobe Connect](#)
- GoToWebinar – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [GoToWebinar](#)
- WebEx – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [WebEx](#)
- Zoom – To learn more or check out pricing options, visit [Zoom](#)

QUICK TIPS

- Keep in mind that not every meeting needs to include screen sharing and/or video
- Public comments options could include in person, by phone, email, comment / chat box and be sure to designate someone to help facilitate the comments
- Consider posting your agenda and/or meeting packet online for easy access
- Confirm with your City Attorney to ensure that all Georgia Open and Public Meeting Laws are followed
- Include all key parties to determine the best option for your public meeting and the various ways that you will inform the public (e.g. City Attorney, City Management, City Clerk, IT, Council / Board, PIO, etc.)
- Select an option that is appropriate for the type of meeting and the number of users / participants
- Establish Virtual Board Meeting Procedures ([Sample](#)) and Etiquette
- Ensure you have sufficient internet access if you chose an online option
- Utilize host controls and/or verify with your IT that security protocols are in place
- Be sure to test each aspect and practice beforehand to ensure everything works properly
- If Council / Board members participate from their home or office be sure to remind them to keep in mind background noises and visuals that could be distracting. Consider using a digital feature that changes their background (e.g. city logo) and show them how to mute and unmute

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ARC Guide – [Virtual Public Engagement Guide for Local Governments](#) (8 pages)
- ARC Webinar – [Conducting Virtual Municipal and Public Meetings Tools & Techniques](#)
- *Government in the Sunshine – [A Guide Georgia's Open Meetings and Open Records Laws for Municipal Officials](#)
- LinkedIn – [Online Alternatives to In-Person Public Meetings During an Emergency](#)