



TOWN OF WELLFLEET

300 MAIN STREET WELLFLEET MASSACHUSETTS 02667

Tel (508) 349-0300 Fax (508) 349-0305

www.wellfleetma.org

To: Selectboard
From: Courtney Butler, Executive Assistant,
Date: September 18, 2020
Re: Board and Committee Meetings During COVID-19

On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued guidance that allows public bodies to hold meetings remotely. Since then, the Town has been conducting all meetings virtually, using the platform Zoom. Many boards and committees, 23 exactly, have been meeting virtually and conducting their business in this manner for the last 6 months with little to no issue. Additionally, staff have worked with board members to either host their meetings for them or teach them how to host themselves, when staff are unavailable.

Thus far, we have had a very successful run with Zoom. I commend the citizens of Wellfleet, as well as our volunteer board and committee members, for being able to quickly pivot to and learn how to use a new technology to ensure Town matters can continue being handled accordingly. While many have been successful, some still have their reservations about the platform and technology. With this, some committees have asked to meet in-person, outside. I have received a response from the Attorney General's Office regarding in-person meetings:

"Access, if not provided by remote means in accordance with the Governor's executive order, must include the opportunity to be physically present as well as to see and hear what is being discussed by the members of the public body. In addition, for a meeting to be truly open to the public, we have determined that it must be held at a location that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The meeting space must be sufficiently large to accommodate anticipated crowds, and a public body must make reasonable efforts to accommodate unexpectedly large turnouts.

A public body may not cap the number of attendees for purposes of complying with the Governor's orders regarding gathering size and physical distancing. Public bodies may consider holding meetings outdoors, if they can ensure that attendees will be able to see and hear the discussions, such as through the use of adequate audio systems. A public body that wishes to hold a meeting outdoors must post notice as they would for any other meeting, which is 48 hours prior to such meeting and include on the notice the date, time and location of the meeting. The location on the notice should be specific, such as the parking lot at a specific town building and if there is more than one parking lot then the notice must identify the specific parking lot where the meeting will be held."

This means that while public bodies may meet outside, in person, that there are requirements and accommodations that must be adhered to. It should also be noted that anyone may record a meeting so long as they notify the Chair first, and do not disturb the meeting in doing so. As we head into the fall and winter months, it is staff opinion that the most accessible and safe option for board and committee members to meet is to use

Zoom. While the COA has the large meeting room, with capability to live-stream meetings, staff at the COA are not comfortable hosting meetings there.

I would like to remind Boards and Committees to please reach out to me at Courtney.butler@wellfleet-ma.gov to schedule their Zoom meetings. If you are nervous or wish to learn more about how to use Zoom, as a participant or host, please know that I welcome your questions and am here for support.

I want to reassure everyone that we take every measure we can to ensure meetings that take place on Zoom are safe from hackers, publicly accessible, and as easy to attend and participate in as possible. I thank you all for your patience and understanding during these last 6 months and look forward to continuing the good work we all do.

Sincerely,



Courtney Butler
Executive Assistant

CC:

Board and Committee Chairs

Wellfleet Residents