

Commission Remote Participation Policy

Volunteer Maine, the Maine Commission for Community Service, [the Commission] allows participation in its public meetings by remote methods in accordance with 1 MRS §403-B(1) et seq.

"Remote methods" means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means when such means are necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability.

Members of the Commission are expected to be physically present for public meetings except when being physically present is not practicable due to:

- (1) The existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the Commission to meet by remote methods;
- (2) Illness, or weather conditions that result in closure or delayed openings of schools or public offices, or other physical condition or temporary absence from the jurisdiction of the Board that causes a member of the Commission to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person at the location in the notice under Section 406 of the Freedom of Access Act;
- 3) As the Commission is a public body with statewide membership, significant distance (defined as over 100 miles one-way from Point A to Point B) a member must travel to be physically present at the location in the notice under Section 406; or
- (4) The area of the Commission's jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel, including but not limited to islands not connected by bridges.

Determination for number one above is up to the Commission chair. Numbers two, three, and four are determined by the impacted Commission member(s).

Notwithstanding the above exceptions, members of the Commission are expected to be physically present for at least one-third of the Commission's regularly scheduled public meetings in any 12-month period in addition to the annual retreat meeting, excluding those held remotely under exception 1 above.

Members of the Commission who attend remotely are responsible for ensuring the technology they use will permit audio and visual participation.

Members of the public will be provided a meaningful opportunity to attend by remote methods when members of the body participate by remote methods or at any other time. Reasonable accommodations may be provided when necessary to provide access to individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations, an individual should contact the Communications Officer on the Commission staff.

When the Commission allows or is required to provide an opportunity for public input during a meeting, an effective means of communication between the members of the body and the public will be provided, such as access to microphone, chat feature, submission of written statements to be read for the Commissioners during public comment, or other methods.

Notice of the meeting will be provided as required in Section 406 of the Freedom of Access Act. When the public may attend by remote methods, the meeting notice will include the means by which members of the public may access the meeting using remote methods. For individuals with disabilities seeking a reasonable accommodation, the notice will identify the specific individual to contact about arranging for the accommodation.

The notice will also identify a location for members of the public to attend in person. The Commission will not determine that public attendance at a proceeding will be limited solely to remote methods except when an emergency or urgent issue exists that requires the Commission to meet by remote methods.

A member of the Commission who participates in a public meeting by remote methods is present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

All votes taken during a public meeting using remote methods must be taken by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, and heard if using only audio technology, by the other members of the Commission and the public.

The Commission will make all documents and other materials considered by the Commission available, electronically or otherwise, to the public who attend by remote methods to the same extent customarily available to members of the public who attend the proceedings of the public body in person, as long as additional costs are not incurred by the Commission.

Adopted: 9/10/2021