

Hold your Board & Commission meetings online

Overview

During the declared local public health emergency, Minneapolis has transitioned to an electronic format for its public meetings and hearings, authorized under Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, to minimize the risk of exposure to or potential spread of COVID-19.

The City is using a software called **Microsoft Teams** to schedule and hold board and commission meetings that people can listen to over the phone for free.

Your committee clerk will receive training and documentation about how to use this online meeting software.

This document covers how you will:

- Prepare for an online ABC meeting.
- Join an online ABC meeting.
- Hold an online ABC meeting.

Online meeting roles

Online meetings require some preparation to be successful, just like your regular meetings. As a board or commission member, you'll see a different view of the meeting than the public.

Meeting Role	Responsibilities
Board or commission member	Can present audio, video, or a screen to the invited meeting members.
Public/resident	A viewer. Listens to the meeting over the phone, and can be anonymous.
Board or commission staff	Makes sure attendees have a great viewing experience by controlling the online meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules the meeting. • Can mute or unmute other people. • Shares a computer screen or presentation. • Can set permissions for people in the meeting.

Instructions

Prepare for an online ABC meeting

1. Set up your space.

- Start getting ready before your meeting begins. Plan to get settled at least 15 minutes early.
- Make sure you are in a quiet room.
 - Sit where you have good lighting so people can see you clearly. If you can, pick a neutral background like a wall, so there won't be people walking around behind you.
 - Sit in a comfortable chair that allows you to sit up so the meeting attendees can see you clearly.
 - Dress how you would for your regular in-person commission meeting.
- Plug in your laptop to make sure it has power for the whole meeting.
- Open any emails, attachments or links you were sent by your committee clerk. If you have a printer, you may want to print your documents instead.

Join the online ABC meeting

2. Enter the meeting.

- Plan to get settled at least 15 minutes early.
- OPTION 1 – Join using your computer
 - In your email meeting invite from staff, select the Join link in the meeting invitation.
 - In the new window that opens, click Join as a guest.
- OPTION 2 – Call into the meeting from your phone.
 - Dial the phone number and conference ID in your meeting invite from staff.

Hold your online ABC meeting

3. Test your equipment

- Test your microphone and webcam with your staff person before the meeting begins.

4. Review process changes

- Voting - All voting must be done by roll call.

5. Know when to turn on your audio and video.

- Mute your microphone before the meeting starts. You can unmute your microphone when you are speaking in the meeting.
- Signal when you want to talk. Decide with your board or commission if you want to use chat to ask a question or be recognized. If you're chairing the meeting, it is also helpful to call on people by name.
- Speak clearly and slowly, at your normal volume. Don't forget to unmute yourself when you are talking, and to mute yourself immediately when you are finished speaking – this reduces feedback/echo when other people talk.
- Say your name when you are beginning to speak, so it is clear who is talking, and remember to describe any visuals or documents you are referencing clearly so others can follow along with the conversation.

6. Stay focused.

- Be attentive and engaged during a call – motions and voting can be confusing if you are distracted.
- Look into the camera when you talk. If you look at your screen instead of your camera, you are looking away from everyone else.
- If something isn't working correctly, send a message to your staff person. You do not have to announce in the meeting that something is not working.

7. Share your screen.

- If you need to share your screen during a meeting, take a few seconds to prepare before you click the share button. Clear your desktop of any programs or windows you may have open, to make sure any private or sensitive information is hidden.
 - Note: the public will be able to hear the meeting, not see what is being presented so all presentations and documents need to be sent to the City in advance for the public to download from the City's website.

[Get help from the City](#)

If something isn't working correctly for you or you have any concerns or questions, contact your assigned City staff. They will have some different options they can try to help, or some instructions to help you fix the issue.