

Town of Rainy River
Policy – Public Participation in An Electronic Meeting (Temporary)

Rationale

The Province of Ontario has declared a state of emergency, effective March 17, 2020. The emergency declaration is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which is currently circling the globe. One of the most effective measures to slow the progress of this virus is to practice self-isolation and social distancing. The Province has also given municipalities the authority to meet electronically in order to continue the business of the municipality without endangering the members of Council and the members of the public.

Public Participation

The Municipal Act requires that all Council and committee meetings be open to the public, with some specific exclusions i.e. discussions surrounding legal advice, discussions surrounding the purchase or sale of the land, discussions pertaining to an identifiable member of staff, etc. (please refer to the Municipal Act for guidance). Given the current circumstances, meetings held in public venue would be in contravention of the Provincial guidelines and could result in fines being issued. The Town of Rainy River Town Council has agreed to meeting electronically until the state of emergency has been lifted and public gatherings are permitted. In order to meet the requirements of the Municipal Act the Council meetings will be broadcast live through a web-based meeting platform and via conference call.

All members of the public are invited to attend. Meeting invitations will be issued to all members of the public who express an interest in attending the meeting. Members of the public will be required to send an email to rainyriver@tbaytel.net or call the municipal office at 807-852-3978 and include their name and how they wish to participate in the meeting (via the internet or through a teleconferencing option). When an individual is requesting electronic attendance they are indicating that they acknowledge and agree to the terms within this policy and set out in the Town's Procedural By-law. And should, through their participation in an electronic meeting breach either this policy and/or the Procedural By-law, their participation in future electronic meetings may be restricted.

Prior to the meeting commencing the meeting invitation criteria will be forwarded to those who wish to attend (approximately one half hour prior to the scheduled start of the meeting). Participation in the meeting only allows for audio and visual broadcast of the meeting, no members of the public shall be given the opportunity to speak without first being placed on the agenda as a delegation.

Procedural By-law

The Town of Rainy River's Procedural By-law, which governs the municipality's conduct and order of business at a meeting, includes provisions for public delegations at the meetings. In accordance with the By-law, any member of the public may address Council during the course of a meeting. Members of the public must provide IN WRITING, to the municipal office, the

business that they wish to bring to the Council's attention. A request to be a delegation must be received by Wednesday afternoon the week prior to the meeting taking place, Committee of the Whole meetings take place the first Monday of the month and Regular Council the second Monday of the month, both being at 5:30 pm. The Mayor will review the information provided and determine whether the delegation will form part of the agenda. All other procedures regarding delegations, such as time limits, number of speakers, etc., shall conform to the Procedural By-law.

Duration

This policy shall be effective from April 9, 2020 until the Province of Ontario has ended the Provincial state of emergency or until such time as the Town Council of the Corporation of the Town of Rainy River deems the continuation of electronic participation to no longer be pertinent.