

COUNTY OF AROOSTOOK
Remote Participation Policy
Adopted Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA § 403-B

Purpose

It is the policy of the County of Aroostook to allow elected members of the Board of County Commissioners and Finance Committee, appointed County employees and the general public to participate in all public meetings as defined by Title 1 § 403 M.R.S.A. by remote means including but not limited to telephonic and video conferencing capabilities.

Conditions and Requirements

Members of the public body (elected officials) are expected to be physically present for public proceedings except when being physically present is not practicable. A member must notify the chair as far in advance as possible; if the member will be unable to physically attend a meeting of the body.

Circumstances in which physical presence for one or more members is not practicable shall include:

1. The existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the public body to meet by remote methods;
2. Illness, other physical condition or temporary absence from the jurisdiction of the body that causes a member of the body to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person at the location in the notice provided by Title 1 § 406 M.R.S.A.; and

3. The area of the public body's jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel.
4. Remote only participation: The public body named above may meet solely by remote means if an emergency or urgent situation requires that all members of the body meet only by remote methods. In that circumstance, public attendance may be restricted to remote access only at the public proceeding.

The chair or presiding officer, in consultation with other members if appropriate and possible, is authorized to make a determination that an emergency or urgent situation requires the body to meet only by remote methods and to limit public attendance at the proceeding to remote means only. The chair or presiding officer's determination will be put in writing and attached to the record of the meeting. Public notice of the determination will be provided as soon as practicable consistent with public notice requirements.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to any individual with a disability upon request.

5. Members of the public will be provided the ability to participate by remote methods and the County will provide conference call and/or video connection web links to any member of the public that wishes to participate by remote methods.
6. If public input is allowed at any meeting where remote participation is allowed, the County will provide an effective means of communication between the members of the body and the public.

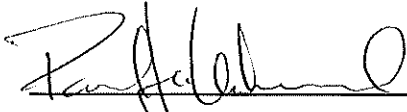
7. Regarding Executive Session – we caution the Board to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to secure the confidentiality of executive sessions when the board is meeting remotely as a whole or when one or more members of the Board are participating remotely, especially when the Board is expected to return to public session to vote on a matter discussed in executive session.
8. All notices of proceedings will be advertised by notification to local media, posted on the County of Aroostook's website and bulletin boards. The notice will include the means by which members of the public may access the proceeding using remote methods. The notice will also identify where the members will be meeting in person and this location will be available for members of the public to attend in person as well.
9. A member of the body who participates in a public proceeding by remote methods is present for purposes of a quorum and voting.
10. All votes taken during a public proceeding 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 other members of the public body and the public; and
11. All documents and other materials considered by the public body will be made 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 in person.
12. This policy repeals County of Aroostook Policy on Telephone Conferencing/Video Conferencing adopted on December 7, 2011, and Amended October 3, 2012, and February 15, 2023.

Effective Date

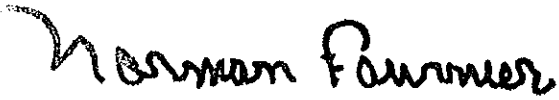
The policy is effective on the date it is adopted following a public hearing held on February 15, 2023, at Fort Kent, Maine. It may be amended by the Board of County Commissioners following the provisions on Title 1 § 403-B M.R.S.A.

Aroostook County Board of County Commissioners

February 15, 2023, at Fort Kent, Maine:



Paul J. Underwood, Chair



Norman L. Fournier, Commissioner



William Dobbins, Commissioner

Attest:



Ryan D. Pelletier, County Administrator/County Clerk