

## **REMOTE APPEARANCE GUIDELINES**

All Waukesha County board, committee, and commission members are expected to attend all meetings in person. However, there may be times when a member's particular situation justifies a request to attend a meeting remotely. Remote appearances are expected to be the exception, not the rule, and are subject to advanced approval by the respective board, committee, or commission chairperson and compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Prior Authorization Required: Absent express authorization allowing for remote appearances contained within the Waukesha County Code of Ordinances ("County Code") or in an individual board, committee or commission's bylaws or rules, no member shall be permitted to participate in a meeting remotely. Absent advance approval and compliance with these guidelines, no member shall be counted as present for the purpose of establishing a quorum of the body or voting unless physically present at the meeting location. The Waukesha County Board of Supervisors (the "County Board") and the County Board's standing committees are not bound by these guidelines but may choose to adopt these guidelines or otherwise establish rules for remote appearances by amendment of the County Code or the County Board's rules of order.
2. Availability of Appropriate Technology: No remote appearances are permitted in the absence of available technology that will meaningfully permit any remote participating member and the public to appropriately participate and observe the meeting. Where the substance or content of the meeting makes remote participation impractical or impossible, it might be necessary to require in person participation. Chairpersons should consult with County IT staff sufficiently in advance of the meeting to ensure the appropriate technology is available and operational to allow for remote participation. Failure of technology shall not be grounds for conducting a meeting in the absence of a quorum or the public or otherwise failing to comply with Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.
3. Public Access by Remote Means: If the chairperson approves a member of the board, committee, or commission to appear remotely, there must also be a method for the public to observe the meeting and the remote member by remote means. Members of the public participating remotely will not be permitted to make statements. If a member of the public wishes to provide public comment to the board, committee, or commission, they must either appear in person or provide written comment to the body in advance of the meeting in accordance with instructions provided in the meeting notice/agenda.
4. Notice/Agenda Content: If any member of the board, committee, or commission will participate remotely, the notice/agenda for the meeting shall include, in addition to a statement of the day, time, location and substance/topics of the meeting:
  - A statement that a member or members of the body will be participating in the meeting remotely and shall be considered present for the purposes of establishing a quorum and voting.
  - Instructions for the public as to how they can observe the meeting by remote means.
  - (If public comment will be allowed at the meeting) A statement that public comment will not be accepted through remote means and directing persons wishing to make public comment to appear in person or submit written comments in advance of the meeting to a specified person/location.
  - Any documents that would be available to the public if they appeared in person to the hearing or instructions on how and where such documents can be accessed remotely.

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5. Remote Appearance Request: A member wishing to appear remotely shall make a request to appear remotely to the chairperson by 12:00 p.m. on the third business day prior to the scheduled meeting to allow adequate time to prepare and post an appropriate notice/agenda and to ensure appropriate technology is available for the meeting. An inability or failure to comply with the three-business day requirement may be excused by the chairperson but under no circumstance shall remote participation in the meeting by the member be allowed if the failure precludes the timely posting of an appropriate notice as required by these guidelines or if remote means for public participation are not available.
6. Chair Approval: The chairperson may approve requests to appear remotely when cause for doing so exists, such as, but not limited to, the existence of natural disaster, severe or harsh weather events, medical reasons or risks of infectious disease(s). Mere convenience to the member shall not constitute good cause to permit remote participation.
7. Requirements for Remote Appearances: All approved remote appearances shall be by video with the member clearly visible to the public and the member's audio and microphone operational. Members must keep their video on at all times and, when practical, accommodations should be made to allow members of the body and the public present at the physical location of the meeting to see and hear any member appearing remotely. Unless speaking, members appearing remotely should keep their microphone muted to prevent audio feedback. No member appearing remotely should use any video technology's chat function except to address technological problems. It is the member's obligation to ensure they have an appropriate and secure internet connection to support their remote appearance.
8. Voting: When any member is participating remotely, roll call votes may be appropriate when a vote requires more than a simple majority. If a voice vote is used, any members voting in the negative must indicate so individually so that proper minutes can be maintained.
9. Closed Sessions: No member appearing remotely shall be permitted to participate in a closed session. The chairperson shall ensure the members and public participating and observing remotely are disconnected prior to the commencement of the closed session. The chairperson shall also ensure quorum is maintained in the closed session. If quorum cannot be maintained, no closed session shall proceed.
10. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting shall indicate which, if any, members participated remotely.
11. Failure to Comply with Guidelines: Failure to comply with these guidelines can result in the chairperson preventing the member from being considered present for quorum and voting purposes or declining the member the privilege of remote participation at future meetings of the body.