

# INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT FOR REMOTE MEETINGS

## Remote Public Meetings

All public body meetings for the Town of Groton will be conducted remotely via electronic means until the guidelines change for gatherings. Whenever feasible, the public will also be able to access and participate in the remote meetings by dialing in through telephone.

## Accessing a Meeting

Please refer to each public body's notice and agenda for information on how to access a remote meeting. Please note that whether you join by telephone, computer, or device, you may be put on hold or in a waiting "room" until granted access to the meeting. You also may be muted or restricted from using any chat function until the public comment portion of the meeting.

## Participation

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the respective "Rules of Procedure" of each public body, to the extent practicable. The public body will follow its agenda and allow public attendees to participate through voice (audio) means where feasible or alternatively using any chat function during the designated public comment periods on the agenda and at other applicable times as needed.

Initially, the meeting's host/organizer will mute all participants that are not members of the public body. This is necessary to control background noise. The host/organizer will then unmute participants or allow participants to unmute themselves when invited to speak by the Chair of the public body.

Please review the following guidelines:

- The Chair will invite comment:
  - during the time designated on the agenda for public comment;
  - after the public body discusses each agenda item;
  - before the public body takes action;
  - during any open public comment period, if applicable; and
  - other times as determined by the public body.
- When a participant/attendee is unmuted, they must state their name before commenting.

If the public body successfully moves to enter an executive session, the meeting's host/organizer will then place everyone that is not part of the executive session on hold or a virtual waiting "room." This will prevent attendees from hearing or participating in the meeting during the duration of the executive session. When the public body exits executive session, the host/organizer will then grant access back to the remote meeting.

When the public body adjourns the meeting, the host/organizer will end the electronic meeting by turning off/closing the remote meeting software. Attendees will be automatically disconnected.

Minutes and other public records that were part of the meeting will be made available in accordance with VT's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.

**To learn more about Remote Public Meetings and the Open Meeting Law, please visit the Secretary of State's Municipal Assistance webpage at <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/laws-resources/covid-19-response/>.**