



**TOWN OF COHASSET**  
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## BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBER GUIDE TO PARTICIPATING IN A ZOOM WEBINAR

### *The difference between a Zoom Webinar vs. Zoom Meeting*

Zoom Webinar allows the participants in the meeting to be sorted as **Panelists** and **Attendees**. Each meeting has an assigned **host** and can assign **co-hosts**.

- **Panelists** - Board and Committee members will be featured as panelists, along with any applicant or individual making a presentation to the Board/Committee.
- **Attendees** - Members of the public and any additional interested parties will be provided with meeting access details that will allow them to participate as attendees.
- **Host** – A staff member will be responsible for organizing the zoom webinar and will be the host of the meeting. The host serves as the convener of the meeting and has ability to mute or unmute all participant and share additional functions for another participant by assigning a co-host.
- **Co-Host** – The staff member host of the meeting can assign co-hosts to assist with running the meeting. It may be another staff member or can be the Chair of the Board/Committee.

### *Staff Assistance*

Town Staff are ready, willing and able to assist with you with the transition to virtual meetings!

- **Staff Liaisons** – Each Board/Committee has a designated staff liaison that can assist with planning and hosting meeting logistics. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions. If you don't know your staff liaison, please contact Planning Director Lauren Lind at [LLind@cohassetma.org](mailto:LLind@cohassetma.org) for assistance.

### *How to Join the Webinar*

You will receive information to access the webinar as a panelist from a staff member. This staff member will be the "host" of the meeting.

- **Download the Zoom Application** – You can download the Zoom Application on your laptop or phone by visiting the website [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us). If you have not yet downloaded prior to clicking on a meeting invitation, you will be prompted to download the app when you attempt to enter a meeting.
- **Invitation Link** – To join the webinar, click the link that the host provided you via email or calendar appointment. This will prompt you to download or open the zoom application on your laptop or phone.
- **Manual** – Open up the Zoom application on your laptop or phone and click to join a meeting. Locate the 9-digit meeting ID/webinar ID from your email or calendar appointment and manually enter the details for access.
- **Phone Dial-In** – You may dial in to the webinar using any of the telephone numbers provided in the email or calendar appointment. Once you have dialed in, enter your meeting access ID and/or password, which can be found under the phone numbers in the details, when prompted.

### *Best Practices*

The following tips will contribute to smooth and effective meeting.

- **Location** – If possible, try to find a stationary location with good lighting to conduct the webinar in. Quiet locations with minimal opportunities for distraction work best.

- **Internet Connection** – Test your internet connection to limit disruptions or delays in your connection during the webinar.
- **Chrome Browser** – We recommend Google Chrome as the browser of choice when participating.
- **Mute is your friend** – When in the webinar, always keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking to avoid feedback noise on the call.
- **Roll Call Votes** – All votes should be taken in roll call fashion. Roll call fashion means you state your full name before stating your vote. Example: “John Doe, Aye” or “Jane Doe, Nay”

### **Public Involvement**

The Town is continuously working to provide a variety of options for the public to participate in Board and Committee meetings.

- **Q&A** - Webinars allow attendees to participate in the meeting using a virtual Question and Answer feature. The meeting host will assist in relaying comments received through the Q&A feature to the panelists for discussion.
  - Attendees using the Q&A feature will be able to type and hear the panelists but will not be able to speak. Therefore, any question received should be read aloud by the host and answered verbally so that all participants can hear the question and answer.
- **Written Statements** - Members of the public will also be encouraged to submit comment in writing in advance of the webinar date as a preferred alternate to using the Q&A function.
- **Recordings** - Webinars will be recorded and uploaded to the Town website post-webinar.
- **Facebook Live** – Some Boards/Committees may choose to stream their meetings on Facebook Live if staff capacity and technology are available.

### **Legislative and Legal Guidance on Virtual Meetings**

The following takeaways are summarized points gathered from legal opinion and legislative action. For more detailed information, please contact Lauren Lind at [LLind@cohassetma.org](mailto:LLind@cohassetma.org).

- **Legislative Relief** – On April 3, 2020, the State of Massachusetts enacted Land Use Permitting Deadline Extensions Municipal Relief Legislation know as Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020. This act provides relief to certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and statutory permitting timelines.
- **Deadline Extensions** – The act temporarily suspends timeframes on permitting deadlines and tolls ability for constructive approval, which is when an application is approved due to inaction in a certain timeframe by the permit granting authority.
- **Remote Participation** – The act temporarily suspends portions of Open Meeting Law so that permit granting authorities can legally conduct meetings and public hearings remotely.

### **Meeting Logistics**

There are multiple steps involved in setting up a Board/committee meeting, even when done virtually.

- **Scheduling** – Meetings should be scheduled as far in advance as possible to ensure ability to reserve one of the Town zoom platform accounts as well as staff time. At the minimum, meetings should be planned one week in advance to allow for staff to complete the necessary steps.
- **48 Hour Advance Agenda Posting** – The requirement that meeting agendas must be posted 48 business hours in advance of the meeting remains. This involves coordination with the Town Clerk’s office.
- **Coordination** – Meeting set up involves coordination between multiple staff members and the members of Boards/committees, therefore, we kindly ask for your patience while we do our best in transitioning to this new virtual environment.