

# Holding Public Meetings in Accordance with Senate Bill 704

## Step 1: Before the Meeting

**Provide** advanced meeting notice, following existing guidance for notifying the public under G.S. 143-318.12. Include details on how the public can access the remote meeting. If it is a conference call, then the local government must provide a means for the public to dial in and hear the remote meeting while it occurs. If the meeting is via video/video streaming then the local governments, must provide a means for the public to login remotely.

**Provide** all documents to all board members prior to meeting.

**If applicable**, make sure presentation capabilities are restricted to designated individuals and prepare the meeting for recording (not required).

## Step 2: Launching the Meeting

**Ensure** meeting is simultaneously available to the public by an audio stream, dial-in conference line, or video live stream. (*YouTube has easy livestream functionality*) If the capacity to video live stream the meeting is available that is great, but in all cases, it must at a minimum provide audio availability.

**Make sure** all Board members hear all communication during the meeting from fellow members and the public. All speakers should identify themselves when speaking unless seen through video.

**Have a** staff member or meeting lead review guidelines including: conducting roll call, identifying actions and votes, and mute. ([Virtual Meeting Best Practices](#))

## Step 3: During the Meeting

**Reference** the specific item or section of the agenda to identify what is being discussed or acted on.

**Vote** by roll call. Board members count for quorum/votes only while active on the remote meeting. No votes may be taken by written or secret ballot. Board members that cannot be seen must say their name a) during roll call, b) prior to taking any action, and c) prior to voting. (*a good practice for all*)

**Closed** sessions may be held in accordance with G.S. 143-318.11; access to the public is not required during this time.

## Step 4: Holding Hearings

**Quasi-Judicial Hearings** can be held if a) the right of an individual to hearing and decision occur during emergency b) all persons participating in the hearing have been notified of the hearing and consent to a remote meeting.

**Public Hearings** can be held, as long as comments are accepted between the initial request for comments and 24 hours before the meeting start.

## Step 5: After the Meeting

**Ensure** meeting minutes reflect a) that it was done by simultaneous communication, b) which board members participated by simultaneous communication, and c) board members who came or left during meeting.

**Make** note of technical challenges and adapt for following meetings.

## Definitions

**When Applicable** - Effective May 4, 2020 and only when there is a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or General Assembly under NC Gen Stat. 166A-90.20 . **It does not apply if there is only a city or county emergency declaration.**

**Remote meeting** - An official meeting, or any part thereof, with any members participating by simultaneous communication.

**Simultaneous communication** - Any communication by telephone conference, video conference or other electronic means.

**No physical quorum is required at any particular site.**

\*\*All chats, instant messages, texts, or other written communications between members of the public body regarding the transaction of the public business during the remote meeting are deemed a public record.

\*\*If you chose to record, please note the recording must be preserved until the meeting minutes are adopted.

*Lumber River Council of Governments*

