

Best Practices for Teleconference and Zoom Meetings for Fish and Game Advisory Committees

This 2020/2021 meeting cycle, we are all faced with challenges and limitations for holding meetings due to COVID-19. To ensure the safety for all participants, advisory committee (AC) meetings will be held via teleconference or Zoom. Boards Support staff will assist the ACs with utilizing these meeting formats and offer the following tips for helping the ACs hold productive meetings

- **Set up:**
 - Contact Boards Support regional coordinators to set up Zoom and/or teleconference capabilities for the members, public and staff to join the meeting.
 - The meeting link, call-in numbers, and access codes will be stated on the public meeting notice and agenda.
 - Practice meetings for AC members to utilize Zoom may be helpful; Boards Support Regional Coordinators can assist with these arrangements.
- **Be prepared**
 - Review meeting material prior to the AC meeting.
 - Make sure you have what you need to do your part.
 - Call into the meeting early to allow it to start at the designated time.
 - Contact the Boards Support Regional Coordinator well before the meeting for any technical assistance.
- **Agenda**
 - The meeting agenda and notice will be provided for each meeting so everyone can follow along.
 - Call in information will be included on the agenda.
 - Avoid deviating from the agenda topics.
 - For longer meetings, schedule breaks.
- **Mind the background noise**
 - Find a quiet place from which to join.
 - Use a head set if possible; avoid speaker phones.
 - Use mute when not speaking – but remember to unmute when you need to speak.
 - **Do not** put the teleconference on hold to take another call; hang up if you must take the other call. Using the hold function often plays elevator music to the listener – which in this case is your entire advisory committee. It is very disruptive.
- **Maintain Quorum**
 - Clearly state your name when called upon to determine quorum.
 - If members leave the meeting unannounced, quorum may be unknowingly lost.
 - Let your fellow members know if you have to leave, and how long you may be gone for.
- **When Speaking**
 - Unmute yourself.
 - State your name for the record before speaking.
 - Address people by name when you speak to them.
 - Mute yourself when you are finished speaking.
 - Stick to the agenda topic being discussed.
- **When Voting**
 - Asking for unanimous consent may be used when possible.

- A roll call vote should be utilized if there is a division.
- Regular voice voting without visual cues does not work very well, particularly for large groups.
- **Plan for delays**
 - Planning and prep work helps. Nevertheless, delays WILL happen.
 - Common delays:
 - Quorum issues
 - Telephone connectivity issues
 - Other tech issues...
- **Common Courtesy**
 - Be patient when waiting to speak.
 - Minimize interruptions or speaking on top of others.
 - Be respectful and polite of the chair and other speakers
- **Elections (See additional instructions below)**
 - Regulations provide for members whose terms have expired to continue serving, so elections can be delayed.
 - Elections may be able to occur via teleconference or Zoom meeting when feasible.
 - Voting participants may be expected to sign in.
 - Oral voting may be required.
- **Zoom Meetings**
 - Boards Support will work with AC Chairpersons and members to provide guidance for utilizing Zoom meetings.
 - Assigning the function of host to the secretary or other member will be necessary when Board Support are not able to assist.
 - Practice meetings are encouraged.
 - Don't be discouraged to try it; Zoom may be a great alternative for in person meetings.

Best Practices for Advisory Committee Elections Through Teleconference or Zoom

With the limitation of in-person Advisory Committee (AC) meetings this meeting cycle due to COVID-19, If your AC would like to conduct elections through teleconference or Zoom, the following are some options and considerations to think about.

Holding elections in a virtual setting will require more responsibility for the regional coordinator (RC). It is important for the AC chair to coordinate with your RC to be sure they are available to assist in the election process.

Options for holding elections through teleconference or Zoom:

1. Roll Call Election- Practical for those that are fine with having no anonymity with who is being voted for.
2. Election conducted during teleconference meeting
 - a. Voting would be conducted via email or text.
 - b. Participants may be required to register with the RC by providing name, physical residence address as well as either the phone number or email that they will be voting from.
 - i. The RC will describe the process for registering to vote in the public notice for the election meeting.

3. Election conducted during videoconference

- a. Voting would be conducted via Zoom poll, but could also include email or text
- b. Participants may be required to register with the RC by providing name, physical residence address as well as either the phone number or email that they will be voting from if unable to use the “polling” feature of Zoom.
 - i. The RC will describe the process for registering to vote in the public notice for the election meeting.
- c. AC members and the public who are participating via videoconference can vote via the “polling” feature. As nominations are made, the RC will enter each nomination into the poll and when nominations are over, the individuals qualified to vote will do so by answering the poll that will be distributed within the meeting.
- d. AC members and the public who are participating via teleconference will not be able to utilize the polling feature and instead, must cast their vote to the RC by voice, email, or text.
- e. Zoom “breakout rooms” can be set up by the RCs to allow individuals to cast votes directly, and privately, to the RC.
- f. If the AC’s meeting schedule allows, it may be advisable to schedule the nomination and election process at separate meetings to allow the members and public more time in which to register to vote in a manner that works best for them.

Considerations:

The process must be laid out in writing in advance of the election process. The AC chair must agree to the conditions of the election and understand that if not all of the conditions are adhered to that the election may be voided.