

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

POLICY MANUAL

Section	Governance
Policy Number	AG-4116-01
Policy Title	Electronic Meetings

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to set clear directions for how electronic meetings are to be conducted.

DEFINITIONS

“Committee” means a Standing, Select or other committee of the Board but does not include Committee of the Whole.

“Committee of the Whole” means a meeting the Board that is limited to receiving information, deliberating, and making recommendations to the Board.

“Electronic Means” include audio only, audio-visual, or other communications facilities.

“Member” means a person elected to the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District or a person appointed to a Committee of the Board.

“Meeting Organizer” means the Corporate Administrator or designated staff person who is the point-of-contact for meeting participants with technical issues.

“Regular Board Meeting” means a meeting of the Board where the date, time and place has been set out in a prepared schedule.

“Special Board Meeting” means a meeting of the Board other than a regular or inaugural meeting.

“Town Hall Meeting” means the informal public comment session usually held before regular meetings of the *Board* where the public have an opportunity to express concerns that relate to the Fire Service, direct questions to the Board, or address the Board regarding a matter included on the agenda.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to: Committee of the Whole Meetings, Regular Meetings, Special Meetings, or Town Hall Meetings of the Board; and meetings of Committees.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

A Committee meeting, or Special Meeting of the Board to deal with urgent new business, may be conducted entirely by Electronic Means at the call of the Chair and provided the Corporate Administrator has received sufficient notice and can make the necessary arrangements.

Members unable to attend a meeting in-person may attend by Electronic Means provided the Corporate Administrator has received sufficient notice and can make the necessary arrangements.

A meeting where Members are participating by Electronic Means must:

- a. Enable the meetings participants to hear, or watch and hear each other;
- b. Except for a meeting that is closed to the public, enable the public to hear, or watch and hear, the Members participating by Electronic Means; and
- c. When In-Camera all efforts must be made to protect the confidentiality of discussions – only Members should be able to hear and see the proceedings.

Notice of a Committee meeting or meeting of the Board to be held exclusively by Electronic Means will inform the public that: the meeting will be held by Electronic Means; where the agenda and meeting materials can be viewed; and if available how the public can participate or observe.

The Corporate Administrator and Chair will usually attend meetings in person if possible but may attend by Electronic Means if required. For a meeting that Members attend both in-person and by Electronic Means if the Chair is not physically present a Member physically present shall be appointed Acting Chair unless waived by unanimous resolution.

For the duration of a meeting held by Electronic Means that is open to the public, the Corporate Administrator or a designated staff person must attend at the place specified in the meeting notice for the public to hear, or watch and hear, the participants.

In extreme circumstances, resulting from the advice of a Health Authority and or the Office of the Provincial Health Office, a Board meeting may be held that does not allow the public to watch, or watch and hear, or participate by Electronic Means and all Members may attend electronically.

The Meeting Organizer will be the point-of-contact for participants with technical issues. If technological issues impact the proceedings of a meeting, the Chair may ask that the meeting be recessed to allow for the issue to be resolved prior to proceeding further with the agenda.

If a Member is disconnected, five minutes will be allotted to reconnecting, after which time the meeting shall resume and no further efforts shall be taken to reconnect, unless quorum is lost.

If quorum is lost because one or more Members becomes disconnected, the meeting shall be recessed for no more than fifteen minutes to reconnect, after which the meeting will be deemed to be adjourned.

If the Recording Secretary becomes disconnected, Members shall appoint one of their own to take minutes for the balance of the meeting.

The Meeting Organizer shall monitor attendees for accurate minutes and attendance and advise the Chair if quorum is lost. Members attending the meeting electronically should inform the Chair when they join and leave the meeting. Members and staff should identify others who are in the room with them if attending electronically.

To identify potential technical problems, Members attending electronically should join the meeting five minutes before the schedule start to allow time to address technical difficulties that may arise.

Members are responsible for eliminating background noise at their location that would interfere with the meeting. All microphones are to be muted unless a meeting participant is speaking.

Members or staff participating via video conference must indicate they would like to speak by physically or electronically raising their hand and keeping it raised until acknowledged by the Chair. A Member must not speak until called upon by the Chair and except on a Point of Order no attendee may interrupt another who is speaking.

If Members or staff are participating via telephone, the Chair will ask if they wish to speak on to a motion after all Members participating in-person or via video conference have spoken.

For Members attending in-person or via video conference voting will be conducted by Members raising their hand and the Chair will ask Members participating via telephone whether they are in favour or opposed. A roll call vote may be used by the Chair to ensure names are correctly identified and recorded for the minutes.

Except for the Chair or Acting Chair, at the beginning of a meeting all microphones will be muted. Members are asked to keep their video on unless leaving the room. Once recognized by the Chair, microphones can be un-mute to speak and should be immediately muted once a Member or staff person has concluded their comments or question.

A Member may begin participation in a meeting by Electronic Means after the meeting has been called to order.

The costs of electronic participation in a Board or Committee meeting will be reimbursed by the District if a Member is participating from a location within Canada or if they have received prior approval of the Chair.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' DISCRETION

The provisions set out in this policy are subject to revision from time to time at the discretion of the *Board of Trustees*.

CROSS REFERENCES

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District *Bylaw No. 146, Meetings Procedures Bylaw 2021*

APPROVALS

Approval date:	August 15, 2022	Approved by:	
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	