

Public Meetings in an Age of Social Distancing

Presenter



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Minnesota GreenStep Cities

Welcome to “Public Meetings in the Age of Social Distancing”

As an introduction, please type your name and city into the chat box.

If you have questions during the presentation, feel free to type them into the chat box for us to address during Q&A.

Upcoming webinars in this series:

- May 18: Telework Best Practices
- May 27: Virtual Community Engagement
- June 8: Telehealth in Minnesota Communities

All webinars are at noon.



Minnesota **GreenStep Cities**

Thank you!

Mark your calendars!

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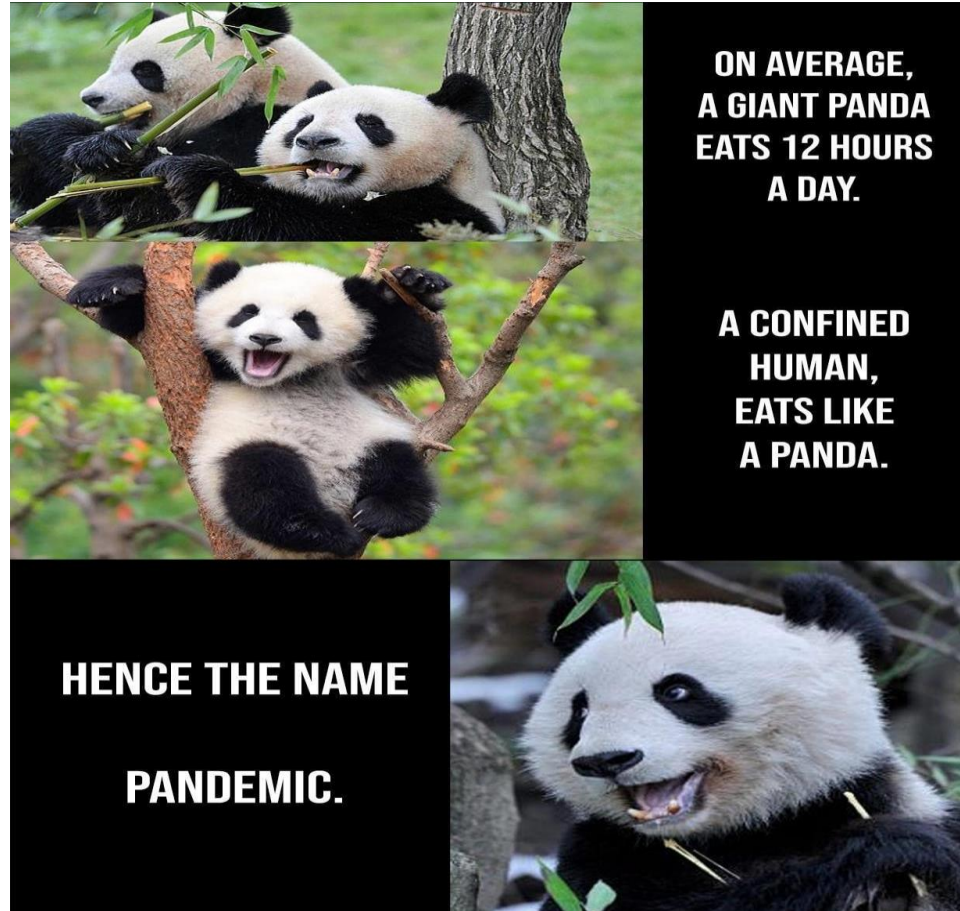
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Agenda

- Virtual Meetings & Transparency Laws
- Leadership
- Meeting Strategies
- Breakout Rooms: Time to Dialogue about Tools and Best Practices

Pandemic





Joining Remotely in Non-Pandemic Time, Interactive Television (13D.02)

Requirements:

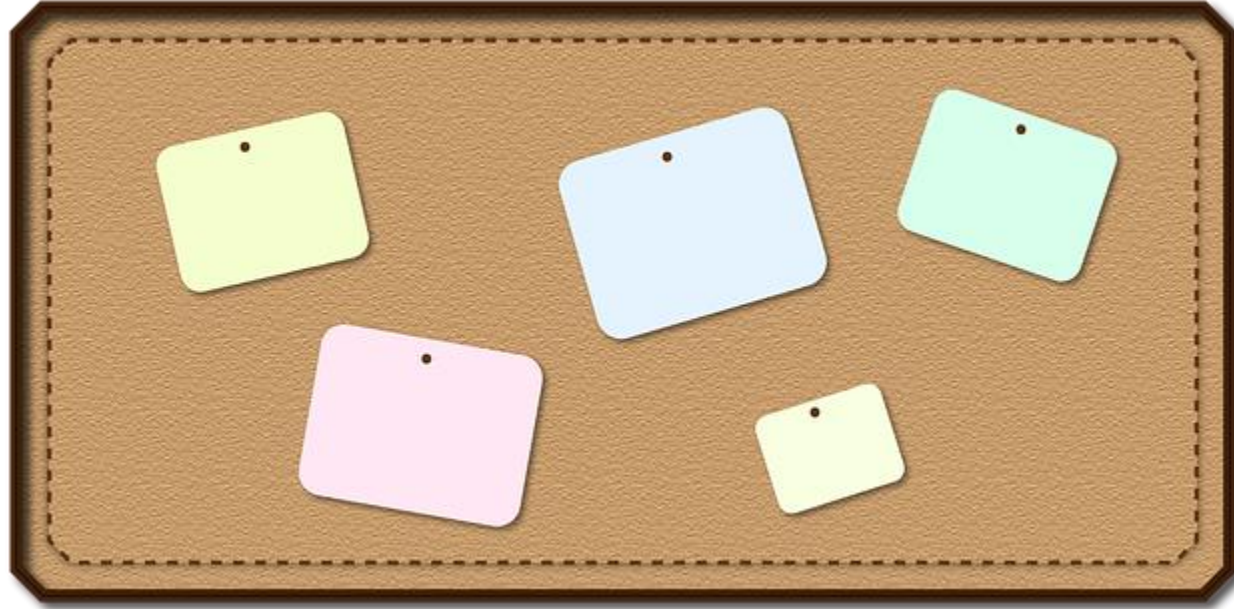
1. At least one member of the body is physically present at the regular meeting location
2. All members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear and see one another and can hear and see all discussion and testimony;
3. Members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear and see all discussion and testimony and all votes of members of the body;
4. Each location at which a member of the body is present is open and accessible to the public (with limited exceptions);
5. All votes are conducted by roll call so each member's vote on each issue can be identified and recorded (new amendment this session).

Joining Remotely in Pandemic: Electronic/Telephonic Meetings (13D.021)

Public bodies may hold meetings via telephone or other electronic means without someone physically present at primary location as long as:

- The presiding officer, chief legal counsel, or chief administrative officer for the affected governing body determines that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under section [13D.02](#) is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under chapter 12
- **All participating members in the meeting can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony;**
- Members of the public at the physical meeting location can hear all discussion, votes "unless (a finding that) attendance at the regular meeting location is not feasible due to the health pandemic"
- At least one member of the public body, chief legal officer or chief administrative officer is present at the meeting location, "unless (a finding that) unfeasible due to the health pandemic";
- **All votes are taken by roll call**

Notice



Public Comment during Pandemic



Statutory Public Hearings



Closed Meetings

- Work with city attorney
- Statutory limitations on when closed meetings allowed still apply
- Provide notice.
- Record (unless Attorney/Client privileged)
- If employee review and can't wait, then have to give employee notice of the meeting and allow them to ask for it to be open

Joining Remotely Post Pandemic

- Group has to go back to complying with the 13D.02 requirements (slide #6), which includes at least one member of body present at the physical meeting location and remote members joining via interactive television (no telephone)
- For a member of the decision making body who wants to join remotely, they must virtually join from a location open and accessible to the public, unless the below apply (exceptions):
 1. That member has not participated more than three times in a calendar year from a location that is not open or accessible to the public; AND, either
 2. The member is serving in the military and is at a required drill, deployed, or on active duty; or
 3. The member has been advised by a health care professional against being in a public place for personal or family medical reasons (**this clause only applies when a state of emergency has been declared under section 12.31, and expires 60 days after the removal of the state of emergency*).

Best Practices for Online meetings

- Use rules of process.
 - One person (mayor or designated person) is running the meeting to ensure orderly discussion and enabling everyone the chance to speak
- One speaker at a time, through leader of meeting. Don't talk over each other.
- Turn off chat feature for decision makers, if can, or educate not to use.
- Role call vote.
- Ensure there is dedicated staff person online or in conference for minute taking.
- Learn how to mute microphone.
- Better to join video by computer, rather than smartphone.
- Be patient with yourselves and each other.
- Protect your meeting space/workspace.
- Perform a soundcheck – but do not talk official city business.
- Be Professional - treat it like an on-site meeting.



Be Leaders



Tips for Leaders

1. **Cut people slack** – remember the situation likely is new for everyone and may be causing angst for all.
2. **Don't play the blame game.** Don't play the power game. Councils and council-staff represent a TEAM.
3. **Focus on process**, not the people involved.
4. **Assume good motives of others.**
5. **Listen to learn**, rather than pretending to listen while formulating a counter argument.
6. **Ask expansive questions and be patient with silence** while waiting for a response. Compromise is good but understanding all the underlying interests may lead to a new idea that meets everyone's needs.
7. **Practice interpersonal empathy.** Remember empathy does not mean giving up your beliefs; rather, it means listening, respecting others' positions, and validating their worth.
8. **Identify individual strengths** of team members and recognize their unique contributions to validate belonging.
9. **Learn to delegate** with clear expectations to empower others.
10. **Celebrate success** – all success. Realize success comes in all shapes and sizes.

Data Laws



DATA



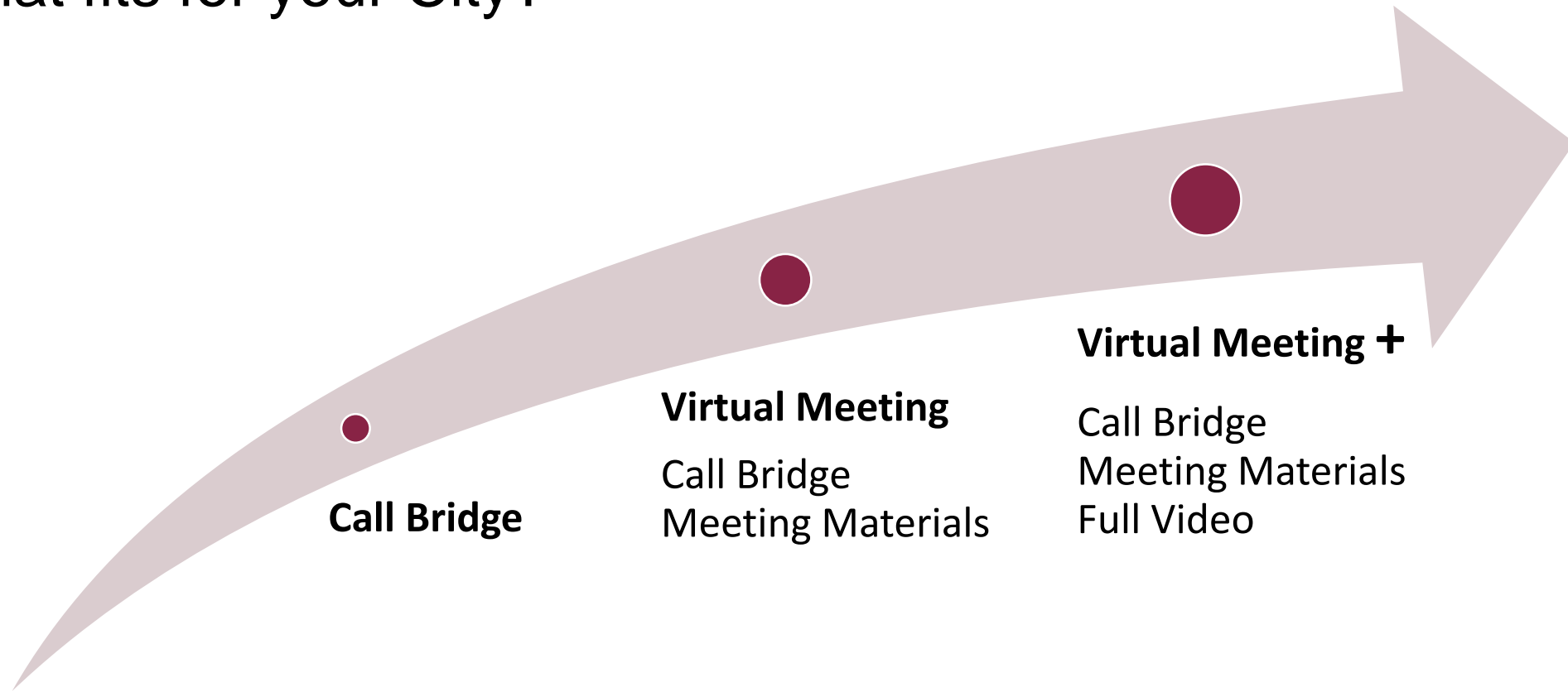
KNOWLEDGE



ACTION

Breakout Session: Technology

What fits for your City?



Questions & Answers



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