

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

R E S O L U T I O N #20-356

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING REMOTE PUBLIC
MEETING PROCEDURES DURING A DECLARED
STATE OF EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, the Division of Local Government Services recently released emergency regulations establishing standard protocols for remote public meetings held by a local public body during a Governor-declared emergency; and

WHEREAS, Local Finance Notice 2020-21 was released on September 24, 2020, to accompany and further explain the new regulations promulgated by the Division of Local Government Services; and

WHEREAS, these regulations include provisions concerning notice, public comment, and minimum requirements for remote meeting technologies, to ensure continuity of government operations and transparency in conducting public business when an emergency requires a governing body to meet remotely; and

WHEREAS, the regulations further require a local public body to adopt by resolution standard procedures and requirements for public comment period during a remote public meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee desires to establish and adopt said procedures attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hopewell, County of Mercer, hereby adopts Remote Meeting Procedures during a Declared State of Emergency attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

Date Adopted: October 5, 2020

CERTIFICATION

I, Laurie E. Gompf, Municipal Clerk, of the Township of Hopewell, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee at the regular meeting held on the 5th day of October, 2020, via Zoom Video Communications.



Laurie E. Gompf, RMC, CMC
Municipal Clerk

Hopewell Township

Remote Public Meeting Procedures

during a Declared State of Emergency

Meetings

In consideration of Executive Order No. 103 issued by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020 declaring a “State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency in the State of New Jersey,” public meetings of Hopewell Township are currently conducted through electronic means only. In-person public meetings remain the default during a declared emergency. When in-person public meetings resume, room capacity restrictions pursuant to Federal and/or State guidelines shall be followed for in-person meetings, and a hybrid public meeting model will be employed as necessary. Zoom shall be the electronic communication platform used as the public’s remote access option for public meetings, to facilitate the public’s access and participation in the Township of Hopewell’s local government business without physical attendance during a declared state of emergency requiring physical distancing limitations.

Notice of Meetings

Supplemental meeting notices, which include clear and concise instructions for accessing the meetings remotely, means for making public comment and where relevant documents, if any, can be found, are advertised on the township website, www.hopewelltp.org, and are posted on the main access door and handicap accessible entrance of the Hopewell Township Municipal Building– viewable from the outside.

Technology & Procedural Matters

Remote Meeting Platform

Zoom electronic communication platform shall be available for every public meeting. The access phone number and computer link for the specified meeting will be available the Friday before the published scheduled regular Committee meetings, typically held on Monday evenings. For Special Meetings, the access phone number and computer link for the specified meeting will be made available 48 hours in advance of the Special Meeting. To receive the login information for the meeting, participants will need to pre-register at the link provided in the notice, which may

be found at www.hopewelltp.org. Once registration is filled out, Zoom will automatically e-mail the login information.

Members of the public attending the meeting remotely may make public comment via Zoom videoconferencing during the meeting. Each speaker will have three (3) minutes to comment. Comments sent via chat on Zoom will not be accepted and will not be made part of the record/minutes.

Public Comments Submitted Prior to Meeting

The public may submit questions or comments via e-mail to lgompf@hopewelltp.org no later than 3 hours prior to the published scheduled Committee meeting. The public may also submit public comments in written letter form to the Hopewell Township Municipal Complex located at 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, Titusville, New Jersey 08560, which must be received no later than 3 hours prior to the published scheduled Committee meeting.

Previously submitted public comment shall be read aloud and addressed during the public meeting that will be heard to all remote participants and the public. A three (3) minute time limit will be placed on the reading of each written comment. Each comment will be read from the beginning until the time limit is reached. The Township Council may pass over duplicate written comments; however, each duplicate comment will be noted for the record with the content summarized.

Public Comments & Conduct from Remote Participants

The procedures and requirements for making public comment, along with an explanation of the audio muting function of the Zoom platform being used, will be announced by the Township Clerk at the beginning of the remote public meeting. The Township Committee will facilitate a dialogue with all commenters to the extent permitted by Zoom technology.

All participants must keep their microphones muted and cameras turned off until directed otherwise. The Clerk will also engage the Zoom Meeting mute function until such time for public comments. Committee members and Township staff may assist the Clerk in controlling the muting function during public comment at the Township's discretion. Prior to any in-person members of the public engaging in public comment, all remote participants will be unmuted and asked to state his/her name and home address before making comment. The Clerk will primarily manage the order of the remote participants' comments.

If a member of the public becomes disruptive during a remote public meeting, including during any period for public comment, the Host shall mute or continue muting the disruptive member of the public and warn that continued disruption may result in their being prevented from speaking during the remote public meeting or removed from the remote public meeting. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity. Time permitting, the disruptive individual shall be allowed to speak after all other members of the public have been given the opportunity to speak. Should the person remain disruptive, the individual may be muted or kept on mute for the remainder of the remote public meeting, or removed from the remote public meeting.

Presentations or Documents

All documents made available to the public in hard copy format will be available prior to the meeting for download. Documents will be available at www.hopewelltp.org in addition to the Meeting Agenda and Remote Meeting Instructions.