CITY OF BREVARD
POLICY FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN OFFICIAL MEETINGS OF APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The purpose of this policy (the "Policy") is to establish procedures for appointed members of boards and committees who are unable to physically attend a board or committee meeting to participate remotely. To promote full participation of advisory board and committee members while ensuring access and transparency for the public as required by the Open Meetings Law, G.S. 143-318.9 *et seq*., the Brevard City Council authorizes remote participation in advisory board and committee meetings subject to existing board or committee policies, state law, and the following procedures and requirements:

A. This policy only applies to appointed boards and committees and does not apply to City Council.

B. For purposes of this policy, "Remote Meeting" is defined as an official meeting, or any part thereof, in which one or more members of the appointed board or committee participate by simultaneous communication via conference telephone, conference video, or other electronic means. Remote participation does not include email, web chat, or text messaging technologies.

C. A member participating remotely shall be counted toward a quorum and may fully participate in all discussions and votes on business of the body, provided that simultaneous communication is maintained for that member.

D. For members of the Brevard Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment, the vote of a member participating remotely shall not be effective as a deciding vote on any matter. Remote participation shall not include voting on quasi-judicial applications, nor shall quasi-judicial hearings be held without a quorum of members present in person, except during a declared national, state, or local emergency covering the city and pursuant to the provisions of NCGS 166A-19.24.

E. Physical attendance by members is strongly encouraged. As such, remote participation may be used in limited circumstances only. Authorized Circumstances for Remote Participation include:

    1. Personal illness or disability that does not impact the member's ability to participate remotely;
    2. Family or other personal emergency;
    3. Employment obligations;
    4. Military service obligations;
    5. Vacation;

6. Personal, employment, or City-related out-of-town travel of such distance as to make physical attendance impractical;
7. Other emergencies that justify remote participation, such as a declaration of a national, state, or local emergency covering the city.

F. A member wishing to participate remotely in a meeting must notify the board or committee chair and the board or committee secretary of the need to participate remotely at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, unless advance notice is impracticable.

G. At the start of the board or committee meeting, and prior to participating in any discussion, the chair shall announce that a member is participating remotely. The member shall identify themselves and state the reason they are participating remotely.

H. A member participating remotely must be fully heard and, if possible, seen by other members of the board or committee and any other individual in attendance at the meeting. A member participating remotely must also be able to hear all other members. Every effort should be made for the member to participate remotely from a location free from outside distractions.

I. A member participating remotely shall notify the chair if leaving the meeting before it is adjourned or rejoining the meeting after a period of absence.

J. If due to technical difficulties, contact with the remotely participating member is lost entirely or if contact becomes unclear, the chair may end remote participation for that member for the balance of the meeting. If remote participation is established but is then interrupted or ends, the remotely participating member will be considered as excused from the meeting. If the remote participant is required for a quorum, then the quorum is lost at that point. The meeting may continue but as a listening session only.

K. If any member is participating remotely, all votes taken shall be by roll call.

L. The minutes of the meeting will reflect that the meeting was conducted by use of simultaneous electronic communication, which members were in attendance by simultaneous communication, and when such member(s) joined or left the meeting. Any interruption to or discontinuation of a member's participation will also be noted in the minutes.

M. At such time as the necessary equipment is installed to provide for live streaming of board and committee meetings, all notices of those meetings shall include the means whereby the public can access the meeting.

N. No member may participate remotely in more than 25% of the regularly scheduled meetings of the board or committee in a rolling 12-month period for any reason other than a declared national, state, or local emergency covering the city. This policy does not limit the number of board or committee members who may participate remotely in a given meeting, provided that either the chair or vice-chair is physically present.