



## Public Meeting Participation Policy

### **I. Statement.**

Public engagement or comment will not be allowed remotely.

### **II. Purpose.**

Establish a policy for remote participation of the public at the Town Board and Commission meetings.

### **II. Definition.**

Public participation can be described as a deliberative process by which interested or affected citizens, are involved in policy-making before a political decision is taken.

Public participation contributes to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information – in the form of additional facts, values, and perspectives obtained through public input – to bring to bear on the decision process.

### **III. Issue.**

Remote participation has inherent limitations because it precludes the elected/appointed official from fully evaluating a speaker's non-verbal language in assessing veracity or credibility.

Managing the public on a virtual platform creates challenges such as no sign in sheets for attendance, longer time needed to allow for public comment, unanticipated technological challenges, and lack of transparency.

The public should not comment in a quasi-judicial public hearing virtually. With no sign in sheet nor physical attendance the public hearing could be deemed unfair.

### **IV. Solution.**

In an effort to promote transparency, the Town has established a YouTube Channel to broadcast public meetings that are conducted at Fraser Town Hall for the Fraser Town Board and Commissions. This creates a way for the public to listen to these meetings live or at another time. This fosters transparency on discussions and decisions. Due to the challenges and limitations of the public commenting virtually they will be required to attend in person to comment.

If an unforeseen circumstance occurs that does not allow a person to attend in person that under normal circumstances would, can ask the Mayor, Chair or Town Manager permission to speak remotely.

The Mayor or Town Manager may suspend these policies due to emergency conditions.