

The Monhegan School Committee allows members of the Committee to participate in a public meeting of the Committee either in person or by remote methods as provided in 1 MRSA §403-B.

For the purpose of this policy, “remote methods” means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may also include other means necessary to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Remote participation by Committee members cannot be by text-only means such as email, text messages, or chat functions.

Members of the Committee are expected to be physically present for Committee meetings except when being physically present is not practicable.

Circumstances in which physical presence for public meetings is not practicable include:

1. The existence of an emergency or other issue that requires the Committee itself to meet by remote methods.

An emergency may be a State-declared emergency, where there has been a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor that applies to the school unit, or a local emergency (e.g., adverse weather conditions) or urgent issue requiring Committee action.

The Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent, will determine whether there is a local emergency or urgent issue that requires a remote meeting of the Committee.

2. Illness, or other physical condition, or temporary absence from the area governed by the Committee that causes a Committee member to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person at the designated physical location of the Committee meeting.

Prior notice of the Committee member’s absence and the reason for it, with indication that the Committee member plans to participate remotely, should be communicated to the Chair as far in advance of the meeting as practicable.

3. Significant distance a member must travel to be physically present at the designated meeting location.

4. The area of the Committee’s jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel, including but not limited to islands not connected by bridges.

The opportunity for the public to comment at Committee meetings (20-A MRSA §1002(20)) applies to remote public meetings. If the Committee allows or is required to provide an opportunity for public participation/public input during the meeting, an effective means of communication between the members of the Committee and the public must be provided (e.g., submitting comments or questions by chat, raising hand on Zoom, submitting written comments to the Superintendent’s office at least 24 hours in advance). Individuals with disabilities seeking a reasonable accommodation should contact the Committee Chair or Superintendent as far in advance of the Committee meeting as practicable.

Members of the public participating in public meetings of the Committee are expected to comply with the guidelines for public participation as determined by the Chair, or in such rules as the Committee may develop specifically for remote meetings. The Chair may set a time limit on public comment or a time limit per person depending on the length of the agenda and number of public attendees asking to speak. In the event of an emergency or substantial disruption, the Chair may declare a recess to restore order or may declare the meeting adjourned or to be continued

to a designated time and place or at the call of the Chair. The Chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.

Notice of all Committee meetings is required (1 MRSA § 406). When the public may attend by remote methods, notice must include the means by which members of the public may access the meeting using remote methods. The notice must also identify a location for members of the public to attend in person.

A member of the Committee who participates remotely in a public meeting of the Committee is considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

All votes taken during a public meeting of the Committee using remote methods must be taken by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, and heard if using only audio technology, by the other members of the Committee and the public.

The Committee will make all documents and other materials to be considered by the Committee available, electronically or otherwise, to members of the public who attend remotely to the same extent customarily available to members of the public who attend public meetings of the Committee in person, as long as additional costs are not incurred by the Committee.

Remote participation is not permitted for meetings where voters of the Plantation meet to vote as a legislative body, such as budget meetings.

Quorum

For a School Committee composed of three members, two shall constitute a quorum. For a Committee composed of five members, three shall constitute a quorum. Rules of Order

In matters of procedure not covered by these By-Laws, the School Committee shall follow Robert's Rule or Order. (Revised: probably April , 1996)

Voting

Voting shall be by voice or show of hands unless a member of the School Committee requests a written ballot. Every vote shall be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary.

Minutes of Meetings

A complete and accurate recording of minutes shall be maintained by the Secretary. At the beginning of each monthly meeting, the minutes of the last monthly meeting, and any intervening special meetings, shall be read, revised if necessary, and approved. When the minutes have been approved, the Secretary shall give a copy to each member of the School Committee, the teacher, the Superintendent, and to the Board of Assessors. A copy of the approved minutes shall be posted at the store and/or post office. The minutes must be available for public inspection.

Adopted: Incomplete record but at least some sections spring, 1989 and possible revision April, 1996

Revision: First Reading and Enactment 02-28-22 by J. Stevens & F. Dunson