

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN OPEN MEETINGS VIA TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM)

With the onset of social distancing ordered by the Governor to help combat COVID-19, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 93 (H.681). This new law suspends the requirement of a designated physical location for open meetings during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Selectboard and most other Richmond boards/commissions/committees will continue to hold meetings using the teleconferencing platform Zoom as a means of allowing members to participate in meetings remotely/safely, and also as a means of allowing the public to remotely and safely view, listen, and participate in meetings.

This platform allows for participation either online with a computer or with a phone (either cell phone or landline). Login and call in information is provided on each meeting agenda.

During meetings on Zoom, the public is welcome to participate, as they are at normal meetings, in accordance with standard meeting procedures. For most agenda items, the Body will discuss the items first, possibly with an invited guest, and then open the topic up for questions and comments from the public.

While the Body is discussing a topic, please have your microphone muted online or on your phone. The reason for muting is that it helps the overall sound quality of the meeting.

If you have a question or comment on a topic and you are joining online you can “raise your hand” via the Zoom feature that’s provided in “Participants.” The Chair will also ask if there is any public comment so those joining by phone may participate. Please wait to be recognized by the Chair, then unmute your microphone and speak. When you are done with the question/comment and any follow-up, please re-mute your microphone or phone.

Please do not use the “Chat” tool during meetings. As with regular meetings, the Body’s actions will be based on their verbal actions and decisions. The Chat tool can be distracting and misleading during a meeting.

It can take 5-10 minutes and several tries to download and connect to Zoom for the first time—so we suggest doing this well in advance of a meeting that you wish to view or participate in. If you need help connecting to Zoom, please feel free to contact Josh Arneson, Town Manager, at least 1 hour prior to a Selectboard meeting at 434-5170 or [jarneson@richmondvt.gov](mailto:jarneson@richmondvt.gov)

Please also feel free to contact Josh if you have questions or comments regarding the protocol described above. We appreciate everyone’s flexibility, patience, good will and good humor during this time that is requiring new procedures and skills, but is also bringing us new opportunities.