A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.20.047, entitled “Corporate Policy - Virtual Public Meetins / Public Engagement During Any Period Where an Emergency has Been Declared to Exist in All or Part of the Municipality”;

AND THAT Council enact a new corporate policy, being “Virtual Public Meetings / Public Engagement During Any Period Where an Emergency has been Declared to Exist in All or Part of the Municipality, POL.COR.20.XX” as attached to this staff report.

B. Overview

This report formalizes a corporate policy for the Town to be able to hold virtual public meetings during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality.

C. Background

Because of the current declared state of emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, staff are proposing that the attached draft corporate policy be enacted by Council to formalize the process currently in place allowing members of the public to provide virtual deputations to Council and Committee meetings and to allow virtual public meetings to be scheduled.

D. Analysis

Public Meetings have been postponed since the declaration of emergency was put in place, but it is staff’s recommendation that through the attached draft policy, that virtual Public Meetings be permitted to proceed.
Staff have been monitoring the direction provided by Grey County as it relates to virtual Public Meetings, and have considered Grey County report [PDR-CW-21-20 Overview of Recent Changes to the Planning Act and Continuing to Process Applications During the Pandemic](#) when drafting the attached corporate policy.

**E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan**

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners  
Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents  
Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence  
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

**F. Environmental Impacts**

None

**G. Financial Impact**

None

**H. In consultation with**

Shawn Everitt, CAO  
Will Thomson, Director of Legal Services  
Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning and Development Services  
Ruth Prince, Director of Finance & IT Services  
Cathy Bailey, Manager of IT Services  
Trevor Houghton, Manager of Community Planning  
Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation

**I. Public Engagement**

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Corrina Giles, Town Clerk, townclerk@thebluemountains.ca

**J. Attached**

1. Corporate Policy “Virtual Public Meetings/Public Engagement During Any Period Where an Emergency has been Declared to Exist in All or Part of the Municipality
Respectfully Submitted,

__________________________
Corrina Giles
Town Clerk

__________________________
Shawn Everitt
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:
Corrina Giles, Town Clerk
townclerk@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 232
Policy

POL.COR.20.XX
Virtual Public Meetings/Public Engagement During any Period Where an Emergency has been Declared to Exist in All or Part of the Municipality

Policy Type: Corporate Policy (Approved by Council)
Date Approved: June 29, 2020
Department: Clerks Department
Staff Report: FAF.20.047
By-Law No.: 2020-

Policy Statement

Policy direction establishing guidelines on how Committees of Council, Committee of the Whole, Committee of Adjustment, Council and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation will pursue public engagement or receive public comments in response to a public notice during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality.

Purpose

To promote transparency and efficiency in local government with respect to the receiving of comments from the public and agencies when virtual meetings are required.

Application

This Policy applies to public engagement (i.e. deputations), and public and agency comments received in response to notices for public open houses and public meetings/hearings.

Definitions

“Livestream” means the official livestream of the Town of The Blue Mountains meetings.

“Meeting” means a Committee of Council Meeting, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Committee of Adjustment Meeting, statutory Public Meeting, Council Meeting or Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation Meeting.
“Virtual” means a method of electronic communication through video and/or audio in which members of Committees of Council, Committee of the Whole, Committee of Adjustment, Council Meetings and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation can convene to discuss business in a manner that can be made viewable to the public during any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality.

**Procedures**

1. During any period where an emergency has been declared to exist in all or part of the municipality, Committees of Council, Committee of the Whole, Committee of Adjustment, Council Meetings and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation Meetings will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams or any other approved Virtual Meeting system.

2. The Committee of the Whole and Council Virtual Meetings will be livestreamed, recorded and posted to the website following the Meeting.

3. The Committees of Council, Committee of Adjustment and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation Virtual Meetings will be recorded and posted to the website following the Meeting.

**Deputation Requests:**

4. Members of the public wishing to appear as a deputation at a Meeting are required to submit a deputation request form. Once received, staff will provide connection details to the person requesting the deputation as to how they may attend the Meeting virtually or via telephone.

**Public Meetings:**

5. Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments or questions in response to Public Meeting Notices in writing, via email or regular lettermail. Any written comments received prior to a Public Meeting will be summarized and included as part of the record of the Public Meeting as referenced in the “Public Meeting Comments Policy, POL.COR.15.02”.

6. Members of the public wishing to provide verbal comments at a Virtual Public Meeting are required to pre-register at least one clear business day in advance of the Meeting. Information will be included on the Public Meeting Notice providing details on how to pre-register for the Virtual Meeting. If a member of the public does not have a computer, they can contact staff via the telephone number provided in the Notice and staff will provide a telephone number to allow that member of the public to attend the Virtual Meeting via telephone. The Virtual Meeting link will not be posted online.
7. Once pre-registered, connection details including a conference identification number will be sent to the person registering to speak at the Public Meeting. The conference identification number is not to be shared.

8. Should a member of the public wish to make a presentation (i.e. Powerpoint) at the Public Meeting, members of the public will be directed to submit a deputation request. Associated presentations are required a minimum of two business days prior to the Virtual Public Meeting. Staff will display the presentation on the screen during the Virtual Public Meeting using the ‘share screen’ function.

9. Members of the public attending the Virtual Public Meeting are instructed to join the meeting at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Upon joining the Virtual Meeting, speakers will be “muted” until it is their turn to speak. Speakers are to provide their full name and address. Once speakers have concluded their comments, they are asked to leave the Virtual Meeting.

10. Applicants, agents or consultants attending the Virtual Public Meeting are instructed to join the meeting at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Upon joining the Virtual Meeting, speakers will be “muted” until it is their turn to speak. Applicants, agents or consultants are to provide their full name, address and identify their client (if applicable). Once the Applicant, agent or consultant have concluded their comments, they are asked to mute their microphone and remain in the Virtual Meeting so as to be available to answer any further questions Council, Committee or the Board members may have.

11. Staff will ensure that the Public Meeting Notice indicates that the meetings may be recorded and reference details with respect to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

12. Approved Minutes of the Virtual Public Meeting will be posted on the Town’s website.

**Exclusions**

Nil

**References and Related Policies**

1. POL.COR.15.02 Public Meeting Comments

2. Town of The Blue Mountains Procedural By-law, 2019-56, as revised.
Virtual Public Meetings/Public Engagement During any Period Where an Emergency has been Declared to Exist in All or Part of the Municipality

**Consequences of Non-Compliance**

Consequences shall commensurate with the severity of non-compliance of this policy

**Review Cycle**

Once per Term of Council