

# GEORGE MUNICIPALITY

Rules of order for conducting virtual meetings of council and its committees

## Rules of Virtual Meetings

### 1. Definitions

In these Rules –

*‘Coronavirus epidemic’* means Covid-19 epidemic as described or determined by the World Health Organization;

*‘Rules of Order’* means the *Rules of Order for Meetings of the Municipal Council and Committees of Council adopted by the George Municipal Council.*

*‘These Rules’* means the *Rules of Virtual Meetings* adopted by council for the conduct of virtual meetings

### 2. Application

The *Rules of Order* remain in operation and are supplemented by these Rules in order to provide for virtual meetings

### 3. Purpose.

The purpose of these Rules is to provide for meetings to be held in a virtual manner.

### 4. Interpretation

(1) A reference in these Rules to a meeting of the Council is not limited to a meeting of members all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “*place*” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.

(2) Any reference in the Rules of Order to being “present” at a meeting, includes being present through remote attendance;

(3) A member in remote attendance attends a meeting when the Speaker certifies that such member is present at the meeting.

(4) The presence of a member in terms of sub-rule (3) shall be deemed to be evidence for the attendance register

(5) A requirement in the Rules of Order that a meeting be open to the public, is satisfied if -

- (a) the meeting is streamed live on the website of the Council; or
- (b) the meeting is recorded and made available on the website of the Council as soon as practicable after the meeting.

## **5. Public Notice of Virtual Meeting**

- (1) The Municipal Manager must give notice to the public of each virtual meeting of the Municipal Council
- (2) A public notice of the city's virtual meeting, must -
  - (a) state that the meeting is virtual and that there is no physical meeting location;
  - (b) describe how members of the public can observe the meeting, and
  - (c) provide a phone number or email address where members of the public can obtain additional information on how the city conducts the meeting and get assistance in operating the web conferencing software.

## **6. Notice and venue of meeting**

- (1) The Speaker shall issue a notice and agenda for a virtual meeting, which must include the date and time and venue of the meeting;
- (2) All documents of the meeting shall be distributed by electronic means to which members have access; and
- (3) The venue where decisions are taken shall be as determined by the Speaker.

## **7. Presiding Officer**

In a virtual meeting the Speaker shall have all the powers as provided for in the Rules of Order

## **8. Quorum**

In a virtual meeting –

- (a) the quorum requirements shall be those as determined in the Rules of Order; and
- (b) members who have accessed the meeting via the secure link sent to their email address shall be deemed present for the purposes of establishing a quorum, taking a decision or voting on a matter.

## **9. Exclusion of the public and media from meetings**

Whenever the Council decides to exclude the public and media from a virtual meeting, electronic access to the meeting must be suspended in order to close all or part of the meeting to the public and media

## **10. Voting**

- (a) Except where voting by secret ballot is prescribed by law, members shall cast their votes electronically or by voice. As far as last-mentioned is concerned, the Speaker shall make a ruling on the method of voting to be used and his ruling in this regard will be final.

- (b) only members who are present when a vote is called shall be permitted to vote;
- (c) the results of a vote are announced and the names of members and how they voted are recorded in the Minutes; and
- (d) members must ensure that their votes are correctly recorded.

### **11. Privileges and Immunities**

Councillors enjoy the same privileges and immunities which they ordinarily enjoy in physical Council proceedings.