

Resolution – Passed 9-14-22

WHEREAS, by passing Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022 (“Chapter 56”), the New York State Legislature amended Section 103 of the Open Meetings Law; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 56 adds Section 103-a of the Open Meetings Law, permitting Queens Community Board 6 (the Board) to authorize its members to attend meetings by videoconferencing under extraordinary circumstances; and

WHEREAS Section 103-a (2)(a) requires the Board to adopt a resolution following a public hearing authorizing the limited use of videoconferencing under such circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Section 103-a (2) allows for hybrid meetings by requiring “that a minimum number of members are present to fulfill the public body’s quorum requirement in the same physical location or locations where the public can attend”; and

WHEREAS Section 103-a(2)(c) requires that members be physically present at any such meeting “unless such member is unable to be physically present at any such meeting location due to extraordinary circumstances . . . including disability, illness, caregiving responsibilities, or any other significant or unexpected factor or event which precludes the member’s physical attendance at such meeting”; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 103-a(2)(d), any members attending by videoconference must, except during executive session, be “heard, seen and identified, while the meeting is being conducted, including but not limited to any motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally discussed or voted upon”; and

WHEREAS Section 103-a(2)(g) requires that any meeting where a member attends by videoconference be recorded, posted to the Board webpage within five business days, and transcribed upon request; and

WHEREAS, Section 103-a(2)(h) requires that members of the public be permitted to attend and participate, if authorized, in any meeting by videoconference when a member attends by videoconference.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Queens Community Board 6 authorizes its members who experience an extraordinary circumstance, as described above and further defined by any rules or written procedures later adopted, to attend meetings by videoconference: (i) as long as a quorum of the members attend in-person at one or more locations open to the public; (ii) as long as the member can be seen, heard, and identified while the open portion of the meeting is being conducted; and (iii) as otherwise permitted under Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board shall create written procedures further governing its use of videoconferencing by its members in compliance with Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022.

In compliance with Public Officers Law (POL) § 103-a(2)(a), Queens Community Board 6 (the Board), following a public hearing, authorized by resolution on 9-14-22 the use of videoconferencing as described in POL § 103-a.

The following procedures are hereby established to satisfy the requirement of POL § 103-a(2)(b) that any public body which in its discretion wishes to permit its members to participate in meetings by videoconferencing from private locations – under extraordinary circumstances – must establish written procedures governing member and public attendance.

1. Queens Community Board 6 members shall be physically present at any meeting of the Board unless such member is unable to be physically present at one of the designated public meeting locations due to extraordinary circumstances.
2. For purposes of these procedures, the term “extraordinary circumstances” includes disability, **the period involving childbirth**, ongoing or sudden illness including health related issues related to family members or other residents of the household, caregiving responsibilities that are related to the care of one suffering from a physical, medical or mental health infirmity, death in the family, **scheduled conflicting out-of-town employment obligations, scheduled vacations and the need to perform military or other compulsory service.**
3. If a member is unable to be physically present at one of the designated public meeting locations and wishes to participate by videoconferencing from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances, the member must notify the Board’s Chair or a designated representative as promptly as possible or, preferably, no later than two business days prior to the scheduled meeting. However, extraordinary circumstances that present themselves on an emergent basis after that time can still be requested to the authorized persons prior to four (4) hours prior to the time of the meeting to enable the online link to the meeting to be provided. Any such requests that are consistent with the definition of “extraordinary circumstances” noted in section #2 shall not be unreasonably denied. At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair shall publicly announce the names of those members who will join the meeting by means of videoconferencing.
4. If there is a quorum of members participating at a physical location(s) open to the public, the Board may properly convene a meeting. A member who is participating from a remote location that is not open to in-person physical attendance by the public shall not count toward a quorum of the Board’s meeting but may participate and vote if there is a quorum of members at a physical location(s) open to the public.
5. Except in the case of executive sessions conducted pursuant to POL § 105, the Board shall ensure that its members can be heard, seen, and identified while the meeting is being conducted, including but not limited to any motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally discussed or voted upon. This shall include the use of first and last name placards physically placed in front of the members or, for members participating by videoconferencing from private locations due to extraordinary circumstances, such members must ensure that their full first and last name appears on their videoconferencing screen. The full participation of members participating by videoconferencing shall not be prevented if, due to technical circumstances beyond their and the Board’s control, video contact cannot be maintained provided that the full first and last name of the affected member(s) appear on the online screen.
6. The minutes of the meetings involving videoconferencing based on extraordinary circumstances pursuant to POL § 103-a shall include which, if any, members participated by videoconferencing from a private location due to such extraordinary circumstances.

7. The public notice for the meeting shall inform the public: (i) that extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing will be used, (ii) where the public can view and/or participate in such meeting, (iii) where required documents and records will be posted or made available, and (iv) the physical location(s) for the meeting where the public can attend.
8. The Board shall provide that each open portion of any meeting conducted using extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing shall be recorded and such recordings posted or linked on the Board's website within five business days following the meeting and shall remain so available for a minimum of five years thereafter. Such recordings shall be transcribed upon request.
9. If members of the Board are authorized to participate by videoconferencing from a private location due to extraordinary circumstances, the Board shall provide the opportunity for members of the public to view such meeting by video, and to participate in proceedings by videoconference in real time where public comment or participation is authorized. The Board shall ensure that where extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing is used, it authorizes the same public participation or testimony as in person participation or testimony.
10. Open meetings of the Board conducted using extraordinary circumstances videoconferencing pursuant to the provisions of POL § 103-a shall utilize technology to permit access by members of the public with disabilities consistent with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, and corresponding guidelines. For the purposes of this guideline, "disability" shall have the meaning defined in Executive Law § 292.
11. The in-person participation requirements of POL § 103-a(2)(c) shall not apply during a [state disaster emergency declared by the governor pursuant to Executive Law § 28 or a local state of emergency proclaimed by the chief executive of a county, city, village or town pursuant to § 24 of the Executive Law] if the affected public official determines that the circumstances necessitating the emergency declaration would affect or impair the ability of public bodies, including this Board, to hold an in-person meeting.
12. These procedures shall be conspicuously posted on the Board's website.

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