

Eau Claire City-County Board of Health

Policy Approval – Board of Health Remote Attendance

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction related to remote meeting attendance of the Eau Claire City-County Board of Health (BOH) members.

POLICY STATEMENT

Given changes in technology and changes in community expectations, as well as the BOH and Health Department priority of supporting diversity, equity and inclusion, the BOH supports providing opportunities for the remote attendance at BOH meetings while still maintaining compliance with State of WI open meeting law, as well as Eau Claire County code, and City of Eau Claire code related to remote attendance and open meetings.

BOH members have the ability to attend and participate in BOH meetings in person or via web-based or telephone remote options. The preferred method of participation continues to be in person and individual BOH members are expected to be in person at BOH meetings whenever it is possible to continue to create opportunities for the fullest engagement with other members and the public. Fully remote participation in BOH meetings may occur for public health emergencies or for urgent health department/BOH or community reasons as determined by the BOH President in consultation with the Health Officer.

PROCEDURE

The following procedures/standing rules will guide BOH remote meetings.

- Remote attendance shall be utilized only when a committee member is unable to attend a meeting in person to allow for the greatest public access and understanding of BOH proceedings. Understanding that Wisconsin Open Meetings Law requires transparency and accessibility for the public, the preference for meeting attendance by BOH members shall be in person.
- BOH members needing to attend remotely must provide 48-hour advance notice to staff of their plan unless there are emergency circumstances.
- BOH members attending remotely shall join the BOH meeting 15 minutes in advance to problem solve any connection issues prior to the start of the meeting.
- BOH members attending remotely shall be in an environment with technology that allows the member to hear and speak in the meeting.
- No BOH member shall text, message, or otherwise communicate with another BOH member during a meeting except in a manner that all members and the public receive contemporaneously.

- Whenever possible BOH members attending remotely shall remain on screen with their video on.
- Whenever possible, the BOH president or Vice President should appear in person to run the meeting if the meeting has both in-person and remote attendance.
- In non-emergency situations, the health department will have staff present and a room reserved and noticed for all BOH meetings to assure access for the public.
- The Board of Health recognizes that Wisconsin Open Meetings Law requires the public have the fullest and most complete information regarding the affairs of government as is compatible with the conduct of governmental business. As such, the Board of Health will strive to provide as much advance notice of meetings with virtual attendance as is reasonably possible and all proceedings shall be open and accessible to the public.
- The public will be made aware of whether there “will” or “may” be BOH members attending virtually depending on the specific BOH meeting and awareness by staff of planned remote attendance by BOH member(s).
- All agendas must comply with public notice requirements but also note that the meeting will be held remotely and include instructions for how the public may access the meeting, including options for people with disabilities. This includes providing the telephone number, video conference link and any necessary passcodes or other login information.
- BOH meetings will be recorded and be made available on request and at website.

REFERENCES

City of Eau Claire code

County of Eau Claire code

Wisconsin Statutes

04/22/2020: Approved by Board of Health

07/26/2023 Revised/Approved by Board of Health