

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPE, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
A RESOLUTION ADOPTING STANDARD PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT MADE DURING REMOTE PUBLIC MEETINGS,
AS WELL AS PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED IN WRITING AHEAD
OF THE REMOTE PUBLIC MEETING**

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-67

WHEREAS, Section 8 of P.L. 2020, c. 34 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-18.11) expressly permits a local public body to conduct a meeting remotely by electronic means during a state of emergency, so long as reasonable public notice and provision for public input is made under the circumstances; and,

WHEREAS, the new rules are adopted on an emergency basis and were effective upon acceptance for filing by the Office of Administrative Law (see N.J.S.A. 52:14B-4(c.), as implemented by N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.5(b)). Concurrently; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 et seq. establishes the purpose of these emergency adopted and concurrently proposed rules, namely to allow public bodies to conduct public business in an open and transparent manner when circumstances of a declared emergency reasonably prevent a public meeting from safely being held in a physical location; defines the key terms used in this chapter; permits a local body to hold a remote public meeting if a declared emergency prevents a local public body from conducting business at a meeting where the public can physically attend; establishes minimum technological and procedural requirements for remote public meetings; generally requires remote public meetings to be noticed both by “adequate notice” and “electronic notice”; states that a public body entering into executive or closed session shall ensure that all audio/video of the session cannot be accessed, except by those individuals authorized to do so and establishes requirements for land use boards holding public hearings on development applications through remote public meetings; and,

WHEREAS, all meetings are normally held at 407 Hope Great Meadows Road, Hope, NJ 07844. Due to the Governor’s mandates/Executive Order for the State of Emergency (Public Health), members of the public are invited to attend the Township Committee meetings via the Zoom virtual meeting service. Please contact the Clerk by email at townclerk@hopetwp-nj.us, check the township website at hopetownship.com or call 908-459-5011 x 1 for instructions on how to access the meeting. Members of the public will be given the opportunity to provide comments during Public Session by raising their hand in the Zoom app. When members of the public sign

into the meeting, they will be muted by the host and unmuted if commenting/asking a question. Members of the public may also send written questions to the above email address to be read into the record during business and work meetings; and,

WHEREAS, meetings are to continue being held virtually through the Zoom app until the Governor's Executive Order(s) have been lifted and at which time the public is again permitted to be in the building. The decision to hold this meeting via electronic means has been made in compliance with P.L. 2020, c.11 given the current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 health situation, the limitations imposed under the Governor's Executive Orders 104 and 107, the physical limitations of the chambers and the importance of social distancing. Official Action may be taken; and,

WHEREAS, as described above, members of the public will be admitted into the virtual (Zoom) meeting and immediately placed on mute by the host. Once the Township Committee calls for or allows public comments/questions, members of the public wishing to speak must raise their "hand" using the appropriate function on their electronic device which allows them to raise their hand. Each member will be allowed to speak/ask their question, with a reasonable time for same allowed, and allow the appropriate member(s) of the Committee to respond. If a member of the public becomes disruptive during a remote public meeting, including during any period for public comment, the member of the local public body charged with running the remote public meeting shall mute or continue muting, or direct appropriate staff to mute or continue muting, the disruptive member of the public and warn that continued disruption may result in their being prevented from speaking during the remote public meeting or removed from the remote public meeting. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors, such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity; and,

WHEREAS, a member of the public who continues to act in a disruptive manner after receiving an initial warning may be muted while other members of the public are allowed to proceed with their questions or comments. If time permits, the disruptive individual shall be allowed to speak after all other members of the public have been given the opportunity to make their comment. Should the person remain disruptive, the individual may be muted or kept on mute for the remainder of the remote public meeting, or removed from the remote public meeting; and,

WHEREAS, any questions received in writing ahead of the scheduled Township Committee meeting will be read into the record and responded to during the public comment session. Any person submitting a question ahead of the meeting will be obligated to submit their full name, physical address and email address in order to have that question read and heard by the Township Committee; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that these are the guidelines/protocols that the Hope Township Committee will implement during the time that the Township Committee meetings will be held virtually until such time as the Municipal Building is once again open to the public for public meetings.

CERTIFICATION

I, Robin L. Keggan, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Hope, County of Warren, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the resolution adopted by the Township of Hope Committee on October 28, 2020.

Robin L. Keggan, RMC, Municipal Clerk