



Board Action Report

File #: 20-182, **Version:** 1

ADDED/ Commissioner Philbeck - BOC - To Authorize the Use of Electronic Means to Conduct Board of Commissioners' Meetings, in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis Should it be Deemed Necessary; and, to Authorize Staff to Pursue all Available Resources for Virtual Meetings including Teleconference and Video Conference Options and to Determine the Appropriate Mechanism for Public Comment

STAFF CONTACT

Donna S. Buff - Clerk to the Board

BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

As Gaston County continues to work through the COVID-19 public health crisis, it is imperative that Gaston County residents are made aware of potential modifications to Commission meetings, particularly regarding public participation. In light of the recommendations on social distancing and measures taken across the nation to avoid the spread of COVID-19, the Board of Commissioners recognizes the need to provide alternatives to its normal operations in order to maintain the safety of Board members, staff and citizens while adhering to state law regarding open meetings.

On 3/17/20 the Board cancelled its April 14 and May 12 Work Sessions and limited meetings to the scheduled monthly Regular Meetings through May (April 28th Regular Meeting and May 26th Regular Meeting). The Board also delayed all zoning public hearings until the May 26, 2020 Regular Meeting.

In the event the Board deems that it is no longer advisable to allow public attendance of its meetings, or it is no longer safe or advisable for the Commissioners and staff to physically attend monthly Regular Meetings, the Board shall implement the use of electronic means to conduct said meetings and authorizes staff to pursue all available resources for virtual meetings including teleconference and video conference options. Staff is also instructed to determine the best mechanism possible for providing citizens the opportunity for public comment, which may include, but is not limited to, digital communication (i.e. email or website form), or recording via a telephone call-in line.

Should the Board determine that such action is necessary, the Clerk to the Board is instructed to provide the proper public notice of said meeting and to provide instructions for the public comment mechanism that will be utilized. Meetings will continue to be televised on Spectrum Channel 16 and AT&T Uverse Channel 99 and live streaming and archived video are also available from the Commission page of the Gaston County website.

The Board of Commissioners is continuously monitoring this evolving situation and will issue guidance on this matter as needed. Citizens should monitor the Gaston County website for additional notifications and alerts.

POLICY IMPACT

Provides for a temporary measure to respond to the COVID-19 public health crisis by authorizing the potential use of electronic means for Board of Commissioners meetings.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A