

A Guide to Participating in Virtual Public Meetings

Please refer to this document for the most comprehensive information on how to use Zoom for Castleton's virtual online public meetings. Read the information below in its entirety. We appreciate your willingness to learn this technology enough to be able to use it well, which will help us ensure community members can follow along and participate remotely. This should be straightforward and user-friendly.

ZOOM MEETING OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

The Town of Castleton will be using Zoom's Webinar feature for virtual online public meetings. Learn more about Zoom here **by right clicking and selecting open hyperlink:** [Video Conferencing, Cloud Phone, Webinars, Chat, Virtual Events | Zoom](#). The webinar feature divides participants into **attendees** and **panelists**.

Select Board & Committee Members are **panelists**. Members of the public who join a Zoom meeting are **attendees**. In the webinar format everyone is allowed to speak at designated times during the meeting.

The meeting is "run" by a host or hosts. Generally, the Town Manager or council chair serve as hosts. The role of the host is to manage the meeting.

The Town will provide a web link to access meetings on the meeting agenda prior to the meeting. You may also use a phone to access meetings. This information will be clearly noted on all upcoming agendas.

HOW TO INSTALL ZOOM

To access all the features of Zoom, you will need to install Zoom on your device. For those using tablets to view the remote meetings, you can download the Zoom application from the Apple App Store [ZOOM Cloud Meetings on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#), or from Google Play [ZOOM Cloud Meetings - Apps on Google Play](#), depending on your device. You can download the Zoom application for laptop/desktop [Download Center - Zoom](#). Make certain you always are using the most up-to-date version.

If you call in by phone, there is no need to install Zoom.

TRAINING

Zoom offers several trainings to help users navigate the platform. Please watch these training videos, totaling three minutes –

[Zoom Support](#) See video tutorials at the bottom of the page.

TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES

Here are a few recommendations to optimize your digital meeting experience.

- **Arrive early.** Join the meeting at least ten minutes before the start time. By joining early, you will have time to troubleshoot any technical challenges.

- **Rename yourself with First & Last Name** (this allows us to prevent "Zoombombing" by hackers from occurring).
- **Silence your phone** and all notifications that could interrupt a meeting. Do the same for your computer.
- Make sure you Zoom **software is updated**.
- Your internet connection has the most significant impact on your video/audio quality. **If you are able, it is best to use a wired Internet connection.**
- To hear and be heard best, we recommend using **a headset or headphones with a microphone**. If you don't have one, don't worry. You can achieve similar results if you are in a **quiet room** for the duration of the meeting. Wear headphones even if you don't have a microphone so that you can hear as well as possible.

The Town of Castleton offers three ways to watch and/or participate in virtual public meetings:

1. Watch and/or **participate in the meeting directly in Zoom** by joining the meeting as an attendee. To join a Zoom meeting, follow the link on the meeting agenda.
2. **Dial in to the meeting with your phone**. This method will also allow you to participate in public comment opportunities. The toll-free dial-in numbers for each meeting will be posted prior to each meeting on the meeting agenda.
3. **Watch the broadcast** (after meeting date and time) All meetings are broadcast on PegTV and the recording links are available on the minutes of each meeting. This allows you to view and hear the meeting but not to participate. Do not try to simultaneously watch a broadcast and participate via Zoom as there will be a delay.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Zoom allows you, an attendee, the opportunity to speak during public comment periods. During public comment you will be asked to use the **"raise your hand"** function to speak. Click on the "raise your hand" option located at the center of your control bar at the bottom of the screen. **Dial *9 to "raise your hand" if connecting by phone**. The host of the meeting will acknowledge each attendee raising their hand in turn. When you are acknowledged, the host will unmute your microphone. You will be required to "accept" this action on your device. At that point, as in regular public meetings, state your name and address prior to asking a question or making a comment. When you are finished speaking, the Chair will again mute your microphone and you will be unable to speak further unless you utilize the "raise your hand" function again. **Note: If you are not using the latest update of Zoom, the host may not be able to "invite you to speak" due to security issues. If this occurs, you will need to call in by phone to make a public comment. To avoid this, always check for the latest Zoom update prior to each meeting.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To ensure privacy during Executive Session, we will observe the following procedures:

- Once a motion to move to Executive Session is approved in the public Zoom meeting, participants in Executive Session will exit the public meeting.
- Executive Session is done securely in private.
- Once Executive Session is complete, participants will re-join the public meeting using their panelist join-link for any potential report from Executive Session and adjournment in front of the public.

QUESTIONS

If you experience any challenges installing or using zoom, please contact Karen Stewart at administration@castletonvt.org