



City of East Chicago
Law Department

4525 Indianapolis Boulevard
East Chicago, Indiana 46312
Ph: (219) 391-8291

Memo

To: All City Boards, Commissions, Board secretaries and Department Heads

From: Carla Morgan, Corporation Counsel

RE: Board Meetings during COVID19 Emergency

Date: April 9, 2020

The current crisis posed by the COVID19 pandemic has created a need to the City to adjust the manner in which public meetings are conducted. This calls for temporary changes in the way in which board and commission meetings, including public meetings and public hearings are conducted. Both the Governor of Indiana and Mayor Copeland have issued Executive Orders in response to the COVID19 emergency in order to protect the health of the public, of board members and city employees.

The Governor's Executive Orders No 20-04 and 20-09 provide that public meetings should be limited to only essential matters critical to the operations of the governmental agency for the duration of our public health emergency, and also waived some requirements of the Indiana Open Door and access to Public Meetings Law. The State Board of Accounts has also waived some requirements for the approval of expenditures of public funds during the emergency, but all transactions still require all proper documentation and approvals, including the advice of counsel in many cases.

Normally I.C. 5-14-1.5-3.5 (of the Open Door Law) requires that board and commission members be physically present at meetings in order to participate in meetings. The Governor's Executive Order has waived those requirements. Members may now, without being physically present, participate in meetings whereby members are able to simultaneously electronically communicate with each other during the meeting. Board and commission members may participate in meetings, including voting and taking final actions via electronic methods. Members of the public may also participate electronically.

The City will continue to broadcast its normal schedule of public meetings on Channel 21, the City's website, the City's YouTube Channel and Facebook. During the COVID19 emergency and statewide stay at home order, the City of East Chicago will make board member attendance via electronic means a requirement of each board and commission meeting. The public will also be provided the means to observe and participate electronically. The City will utilize Zoom, which has been recommended by the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). The board/commission secretary, stenographer and one board member must be present in person in order to conduct, moderate and properly document the meeting which is otherwise conducted electronically. As with public comments at regular public meetings, members of the public who want to participate electronically will need to provide their names and residence. The public's Zoom link will need to be moderated during the meeting to provide members of the public with the opportunity to participate in public comment. Where members of the public attend in person, not more than a grand total of ten people may be present in the room, and all persons, including board members and staff. The Mayor's Office must be contacted prior to any board or commission meeting being cancelled or rescheduled.



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It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head and Board Secretary to contact Steve Segura SSegura@EastChicago.com and Jonathan Madera JMadera@EastChicago.com ***in advance*** of any Board or Commission meeting to finalize procedures and set up the Zoom video conference link required to conduct the meeting electronically. These procedures will include setting up the Zoom video conference link, distributing the link to board and/or commission members and providing access information to the public.