

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, Governor Baker issued an emergency Order on March 12, 2020, allowing public bodies greater flexibility in utilizing technology in the conduct of meetings under the Open Meeting Law. Due to the current circumstances and recommendations at both the state and federal levels to limit or avoid public gatherings, including Governor Baker's ban on gatherings of more than 25 people, together with the present closure of Town Hall and other public buildings to the public, the town has decided to implement the "remote participation" procedures allowed under Governor Baker's emergency Order for all boards, committees, and commissions. This means that:

1. All or any of the members of the public body may choose to participate in a public meeting via remote access. Meetings may be virtual, in their entirety.
2. The public will not be allowed into a Board/Committee meeting, even where there are any members of the public body and/or town staff or official(s) physically present at the meeting location during the meeting. "Public comment" portions of meetings will be temporarily suspended.
3. The public will continue to have access to watch the meetings via the local cable access channel in real time. Meetings can be watched within approximately an hour of the broadcast as follows:
 - a. On the Town's website at www.lanesborough-ma.gov; and
 - b. As part of LCATV upgrades residents can now access meetings on Roku/Apple TV devices. Anyone with these devices is now able to download the "Cablecast Screenweave" app. From here, you can scroll through channels until you find LCATV. Once you click on that, you will be taken to Lanesborough's video on demand content and can watch all of the meetings on your TV.
4. If, despite our best efforts, our technological capabilities do not adequately support public access to virtual or remote meetings, the town will ensure that an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings at the meeting is posted on the Town's website as soon as possible after the meeting.
5. For executive session meetings, public access to the meeting will be limited to the open session portion(s) of the meeting only. Public access to any audio, video, internet or web-based broadcast of the meeting will be discontinued when the public body enters executive session.
6. Where individuals have a right, or are required, to attend a public meeting or hearing, including executive session meetings, they will be provided with information about how to participate in the meeting/hearing remotely.
7. Meeting notices will still be posted at least 48 hours in advance (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays), unless it is an emergency meeting as defined under the Open Meeting Law (in which event, the meeting notice will be posted with as much advanced notice as is possible in the circumstances). Minutes will still be taken.
8. All board and committee meetings will be videoed and posted until further notice.

Please check individual meeting agendas on the calendar on the Town's website, located at www.lanesborough-ma.gov, for the latest information regarding meetings. Each meeting may experience unique circumstances that may require last minute changes in protocol, including cancellation or rescheduling. We appreciate your patience as we undergo this shift in a significant aspect of how the town conducts business.