



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Brett P. Smiley, Director
One Capitol Hill, Fourth Floor
Providence, RI 02908

Office: (401) 222-2280
Fax: (401) 222-6436

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Directors
Chairpersons of Boards and Commissions

FROM: Brett P. Smiley *BPSmiley*
Director
Department of Administration

DATE: March 24, 2020

RE: **Guidance with Respect to Executive Order 20-05 (OMA)**

In response to community concerns raised with respect to Executive Order 20-05 as issued by the Honorable Governor Gina M. Raimondo (see attached), I provide the following guidance for public meetings which cannot be delayed or continued:

1. In the event that a public body meets in-person, and the public body has the capability of providing remote audio and/or video access by the general public, it should do so. For Executive Branch agencies, such capability may be available through services that the Division of Information Technology (“DOIT”) can identify for you.
2. In the event that a meeting is held at a physical location, the media, on a pool basis if appropriate, and the public should be permitted to attend, while being mindful of the attendance limitations set forth in Executive Order 20-04, as may be amended (see attached).
3. In the event that either audio and/or video coverage of a meeting is interrupted, the meeting shall be suspended, with the record reflecting such suspension, until such time as functionality is restored.
4. Should the members of the public body have the technology available to them during a remote video meeting, the members should allow themselves to be visible to the public during the entirety of the meeting.
5. At the commencement of a meeting that the record reflect which members are in attendance in-person, if any, and which members are participating remotely, if any.
6. It is important that each member identify themselves before speaking so that the record is clear as to who is discussing or questioning a matter. And, it is prudent to have all votes be taken by roll call with identification of the person voting.
7. If possible, all documents anticipated to be publicly presented at a meeting should be posted on the public body’s website prior to the start of the meeting. Such posting should not be considered part of any record until admitted into evidence and/or the record by the presiding officer. In the event that an unanticipated document is introduced at the open meeting, the public body should post the document to its website as soon as practicable.

This guidance is not intended to be all inclusive. Each of us is responsible to conduct our proceedings/meetings in the interests of transparency, during this emergency period. As public servants we serve our citizens; and, they are entitled to know how government is acting on their behalf. As we adapt to new challenges, we will need to make decisions. Let those decisions always be guided by the desire for transparency.

BPS/njr

Attachments (2)