



## Advisory Group Support

### Hosting 4-H Meetings Online in an Emergency

*Audience: Internal Staff Resource*

While virtual meetings are not ideal, they may be the only way to conduct necessary business until a face-to-face meeting can occur. Follow these steps to ensure fairness to all members and meeting participants.

It's during times like this that advisory groups may consider hosting a virtual meeting using programs such as Zoom. To assist you setting up a zoom meeting reach out to [Alan Pilkenton](#) or [Gwynn Shelle](#)

While virtual meetings are not ideal, they may be the only way to conduct necessary business during times of emergency. A virtual meeting is the better choice when compared to conference calls or a call-in option. Generally, Michigan 4-H discourages voting on issues via conference calls. The tips below will help guide you through a conference call or Zoom meeting to help ensure fairness to all members and program participants.

- When possible every committee member should have access to a video feed connected through their device with a working microphone and camera. However, there may be times when someone needs to call-in; during these instances, the chair/president needs to be mindful of the call-in participants and making sure they are engaged.
- When possible every committee member should keep their camera on so participants can see each other while engaging in discussion. This maintains the closest experience to an in-person meeting because non-verbal communication can also be shared.
- Using the video on your device can take up a lot of bandwidth. If you are connected and you are noticing lag or freezing, you might consider turning off your video, even though this doesn't allow for non-verbal communication.



- If a small group is meeting in one place (i.e. a family) with one device, make sure a camera is showing all the participants so others can see and engage with each of them.
- If multiple devices are connected to the webinar in the same room, there can be microphone feedback issues. You may choose to mute both the mic and the speaker on all but one device.
- Families may also choose to participate in separate rooms of the same household with multiple devices. Connecting multiple devices to the same internet connection may put a strain on connectivity and create challenges with audio/video capabilities.
- Consider putting minutes and an agenda on a cloud-based, synchronous storage platform such as Google Docs so everyone can follow along as the meeting takes place. This helps the lines of communication, which can be challenging when virtual. Only the secretary or person given permission by the secretary should add or alter any of the notes.
- Take roll call vote as it is difficult to hear if you have a majority vote online.
- When it is difficult to hear the president due to feedback or a poor connection, it would be a good idea to move the president duties to the vice president or another member who is not having those challenges for this meeting.
- It is often easier to get distracted in a virtual meeting than in a face-to-face meeting. Regular check-ins, either through votes or discussion, can help ensure the group is engaged.
- Share the revised meeting format along with the link to your entire 4-H membership so they, too, can log in and participate.
- Due to the group not being in person please be mindful that you cannot easily see when a person is not speaking or seems disconnected from the discussion, which might point to concerns with the motion.
- 4-H advisory groups are encouraged to utilize youth-adult partnerships and it is easy to lose sight of the [youth members](#) and their voice when not in person.

Use virtual meetings during times of emergency or when all other options have been exhausted but official business needs to take place. 4-H advisory groups work best when the members can have open discussion, hear all the discussion clearly and can easily see the nonverbal communication of the other members.

For further information help with online meetings contact the 4-H Leadership and Civic Engagement team at [MSUE.DL.4HLeadership@msu.edu](mailto:MSUE.DL.4HLeadership@msu.edu).

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