

Gray Town Council Virtual Meeting Portal

March 24, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily changes the way the Town Council will meet. The Governor's Executive Order prohibiting public gatherings of more than 10 people, coupled with the goal of increasing “social distancing” (6 feet) to prevent the spread of the virus, necessitate temporarily changing the way the Town Council does business. The Legislature relaxed the rules prohibiting “virtual” meetings (LD2167) to allow the Town Council (and other essential committees) to continue meeting “publicly,” but in a new venue.

PLEASE READ: Thank you for taking a minute to read this short introduction completely. It will help to ensure everyone who wants to participate can do so with the least amount of confusion and frustration possible.

How will this work? Currently we are using a platform called **Microsoft Teams** to host our meetings. As we gain experience meeting this way, we will work to continually improve the process. In the beginning, it will not be perfect, but we cannot let that get in the way of doing the Town's business. We can improve the process as time goes on. This is how our meeting will work “virtually” today:

IMPORTANT NOTES: Not all browsers will work with Microsoft Teams. We suggest you use either Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome. **To minimize sound issues, it is CRITICAL that you use headphones or ear buds.** If you do not have any, please mute your microphone.

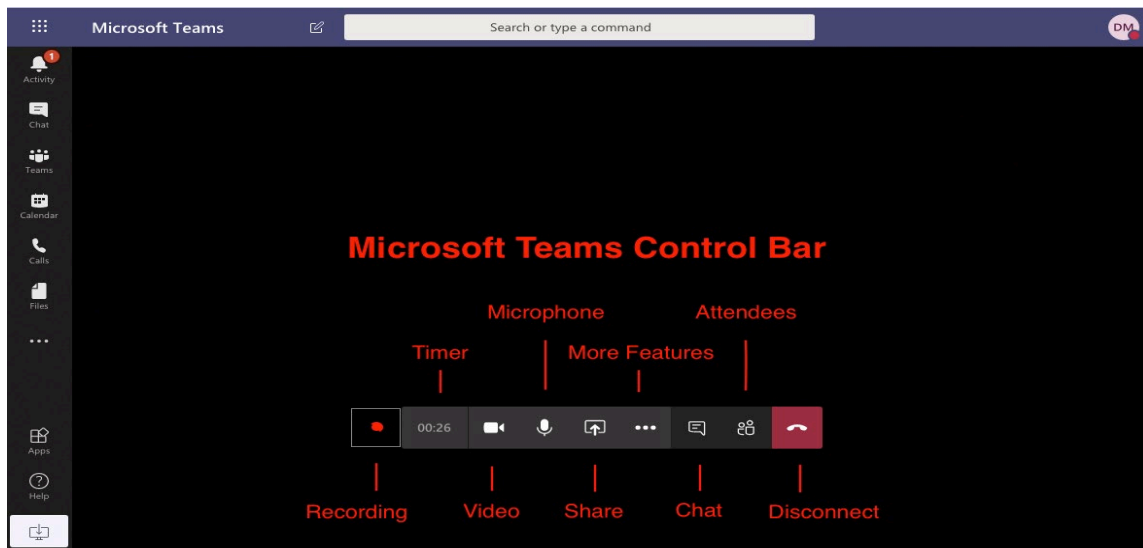
This is a public meeting and it is being recorded. Everything that is said, captured by video, or written will be made available on the Town's website.

1. To “join” our meeting, click on the link **PROVIDED on the [homepage of graymaine.org](http://graymaine.org).**
2. When that page loads you will be asked to type in your name. Then click on the link that says “join on the web instead”. You do not need to download any apps. This link will take you to the “lobby” of our virtual meeting.
3. The “Administrator” of our meeting will see that you wish to join and give you access. This may take a few seconds or even a minute depending on how many people are trying to join the meeting at any given time.
4. **Please make sure your microphone is off by clicking on the microphone symbol in the control bar near the bottom of your screen.** A diagonal line appears over the microphone to indicate it is off.

How to Navigate your way in our “virtual” meeting. This is a screen shot with the control bar you will see in Microsoft Teams. The controls include:

- **Recording light:** If this light is red, the meeting is being recorded.
- **Timer:** Shows you how long you've been in the meeting.
- **Camera:** Click to turn the video camera on your device on or off.
- **Microphone:** Click to turn the microphone on your device on or off.
- **Share:** Click this icon to share the meeting with another person.
- **⋮:** Click this icon to reach additional features and settings.
- **Chat:** Click this icon to type and send messages to **ALL** the participants.
- See the “Chat Etiquette” section below for how this feature will be used during the meeting.
- **List of Attendees:** Click this icon to see a list of everyone participating in the meeting.
- **Disconnect:** To leave the meeting click this icon.

If the control bar disappears, moving your cursor will bring it back into view.



Chat Etiquette: Many of the normal cues we use to communicate with each other are missing in a virtual meeting. In a traditional meeting you see most people at the same time. You can see if someone raises their hand and there is little confusion about who is speaking. In this virtual meeting place, we need to learn a few new procedures.

- The Chair of the Council/ Committee will still facilitate our meetings.
- None of our Council/ Committee roles or rules have changed.
- **The times when you can join in public comment will be clearly announced.**
- If you have a comment or a question, during allowed public comment sections of the meeting, click on the Chat icon.
- A window will open in which you can type your question or comment.
- Click on the paper airplane icon to submit what you have written.
- If you ask a question during public comment periods, it will be addressed by the Chair in the order in which it was received. Normal rules related to comments remain in effect.
- **Verbal requests to be recognized will not be recognized.** If you are unable to type please wait for a break in the conversation, state your name and let the Chair know you are unable to type. The Chair will explain how you will be able to participate in the meeting.
- **All comments will be recorded, but not all comments will receive a response.** **The meeting rules have not changed. Public Comment is ONLY allowed during specified portions of the meeting. Comments made otherwise, will not be recognized.** Please note – comments, questions or feedback on any topic can be sent to the Council via e-mail or by calling at any time outside the meeting format.
- Each Councilor will be called in turn by the Chair to comment or vote on each agenda item. Votes will be recorded in the Chat as well.
- Councilors that wish to respond to a comment or answer a question will seek recognition from the Chair via Chat and wait to be recognized before speaking.

Patience is of the keys to having a successful meeting. Meeting this way requires more structure. It will take longer to move through the agenda. We can count on there being bumps along the way. That said, we can do this and as time goes by, we will get better at it.

Thank you for participating and for your help in making this process work for the benefit of our community.