**Electronic Participation Policy**

It is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that individual members of the Council may, with the approval of a quorum that is physically assembled, participate in meetings of the governing body by electronic communications means as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2.

A Council member who seeks to participate electronically must notify that the Mayor that:

1 – The member is unable to attend the meeting due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member’s physical attendance (medical condition or disability need not be identified); or

2 – The member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter. Participation by a member pursuant to 2.2-3708.2 is limited to each calendar year to two meetings.

If a participation by a member through electronic communication means is approved by a vote of the quorum that is physically assembled, the minutes will record the remote location from which the member participated. (The remote location need not be open to the public.) However, if three or more members are gathered at the same remote location, then such remote location shall be open to the public.

If electronic participation is approved, the minutes must reflect that the member participated through electronic communication means due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevented the member’s physical attendance. If the member participates electronically because of a personal reason, the minutes must reflect the specific nature of the personal matter cited by the member.

Whenever an individual member participates from a remote location that is open to the public there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

**Emergency Meetings (2.2-3708.2(A)(3):**

Any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency pursuant to Virginia Code Section 44-146.17, provided that (i) the catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assembly a quorum in a single location and (ii) the purpose of the meeting is to address the emergency. The public body convening the meeting in accordance with this subdivision shall:

1 – Give public notice using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the public body conducting the meeting;

2 – Make arrangements for public access to such meeting;

The nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic means, and the type of electronic communications means by which the meeting was held shall be stated in the minutes.

\*\*Please note that should the locality declare a state of emergency, it is imperative to keep in mind that electronic meetings must only address the emergency. **If the continuity of local government services is imperative during the emergency the declaration should state that so that the electronic meeting can include items related to such.**