

**Municipal Alert  
February 18, 2022**

**AUTHORIZATION FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION FOR PUBLIC  
BODIES AND FOR REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETINGS IS  
EXTENDED THROUGH JULY 14, 2022**

On February 12, 2022, the Governor signed Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, which extends the authority for remote participation for all public bodies through July 14, 2022. This session law also extends the authority for representative town meetings to meet by remote means, through July 14, 2022. These temporary measures provide public bodies and representative town meetings the ability to choose to continue the now well-established remote meeting protocols, first established back in March of 2020. In response to public demand and interest from cities and towns, the General Court will take the additional time to evaluate long-term action, to decide if remote participation for public bodies and representative town meetings is here to stay. The extended authorization keeps all of the same procedural requirements and safeguards in place from the original authorizations and extensions.

For public bodies meeting remotely, the law authorizes the public body to allow remote participation by members, in any meeting, and allows a quorum of the body and the chair to participate via remote participation, without any requirement for physical presence. The law further requires that where a public body elects to hold a meeting by remote means, it must enable the public to follow the proceedings through adequate, alternative means.

With respect to the authorization for remote representative town meetings, Section 26 of the law requires the same determination by the moderator “that it is not possible to safely assemble the town meeting members and interested members of the public in a common location while complying with any applicable state or local orders, directives or guidance concerning public assemblies.” The moderator may then request that the select board or board of selectmen authorize a remote town meeting.

This authorization is allowed whether or not a town meeting warrant has closed. If closed, notice must be provided to the voters that town meeting will be held via remote means. If a warrant has not closed, then the warrant must provide that same notice.

As with the prior authorizations, the determination to hold a remote town meeting must be approved by that town meeting. Section 26(f) requires that as its first order of business, a representative town meeting which is meeting through remote participation shall vote on whether to commence business at the town meeting remotely.

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In addition to extending a number of other COVID-19 relief provisions, the legislation also included an extension of previous provisions allowing towns to reduce the quorum requirements for town meetings.

This Client Alert was prepared by Karis North. This alert was reviewed with Rachel Millette and Peter Mello. If you have any questions, please contact Karis North, Peter Mello, the attorney responsible for your account, or call (617) 479-5000.

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