

Making Sure Your Virtual Church Meeting is Legally Valid

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Overview

- Hierarchy of law, documents & rules
- *Robert's Rules of Order* and virtual meetings
- Virtual meetings and expectations
- Meeting basics
- Drafting special rules for virtual meetings

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Hierarchy of Laws & Rules

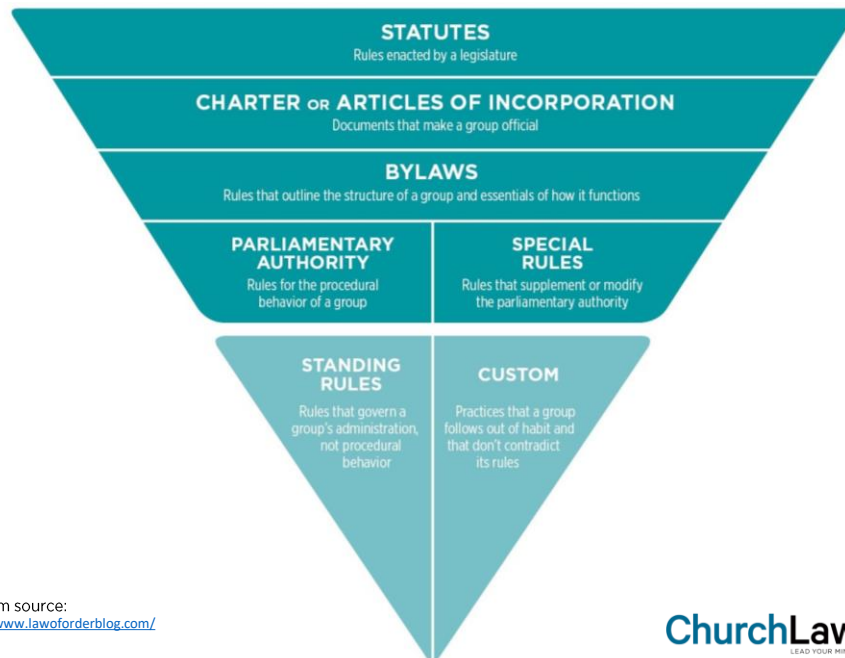


Diagram source:
<https://www.lawoforderblog.com/>

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Virtual Meetings & *Robert's Rules of Order*

Default rule for electronic meetings:

“Except as authorized in the bylaws the business of an organization or board can be validly transacted only at a regular or properly called meeting —

That is,... a single gathering in one room or area —

Of the assembly of its members at which a quorum is present.”

- *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th Edition, page 97

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Virtual Meetings & *Robert's Rules of Order*



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Deliberative Assembly Defined:

A group that —

- “Meet[s] to determine, in full and free discussion, courses of action to be taken in the name of the entire group”;
- Meets “in a single room or area or under equivalent conditions of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participants”;
- Where each member is free to act “according to their own judgment”;
- Where each member has an equal vote; and
- Where a member’s disagreement with the majority does not require withdrawal from membership.

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, pages 1–2.

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Deliberative Assembly Characteristics:

- Majority Rules
- Minority Rights
- Right to Information
- Right to Discussion
- Right to Vote

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Definition of Meeting:

“[A] single official gathering of . . . members in one room or area to transact business for a length of time during which . . . the members do not separate.”

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, page 81.

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Baseline Rule 1:

Follow your bylaws precisely.

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, page 97-98.

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Baseline Rule 2:

Participants must have an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, page 97-98.

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Baseline Rule 3:

Give sufficient notice.

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, pages 97-98.

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Baseline Rule 4:

Adopt special rules.

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition, pages 98-99.

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Virtual Meetings & Expectations



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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order



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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

- Type of equipment or software for participation
- Methods for determining a quorum
- Methods for seeking recognition & obtaining the floor
- Methods for proposing motions
- Methods for taking & verifying votes
- Methods for raising a point of order or otherwise interrupting
- Contingencies for technical difficulties
- Rules for non-members

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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

Define “Virtual Meeting”

- Telephone Only?
- Videoconference Required?
- Is Remote Attendance a Right or Only if the Organization Allows It?
- What About Members Who Want to Attend in Person?
- What About Members Who Want to Gather and Participate Electronically in One Place?

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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

Type of Equipment or Software for Participation

- AdobeConnect
- Zoom!
- GoToMeeting
- Cisco WebEx
- State the Software that You Will Use
- State the Type of Internet Needed
- State the Type of Technology Needed
- State Whether Access to Email or Text Is Needed

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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

Methods for Determining a Quorum

- Sign-In Process
 - For Hosts/Co-Hosts
 - For Attendees

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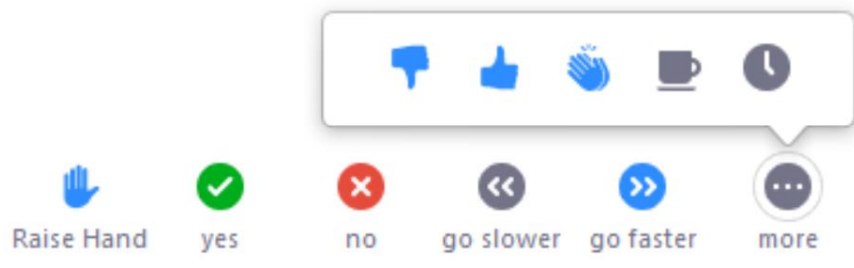
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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

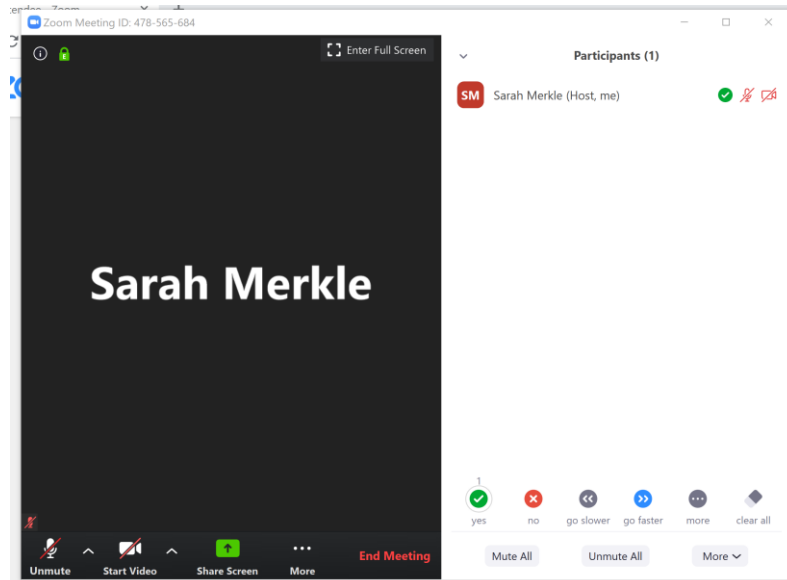
Methods for Seeking Recognition & Obtaining the Floor

- General Recognition Principles
- Chat Feature
- Method of “Raising Hands”
- General Debate Limits

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Practice Motions

- I move that no sermon be longer than 25 minutes.
- I move that we have a potluck lunch after church every Sunday.

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Virtual Meetings & Special Rules of Order

Methods for Making Motions

- Written vs. Verbal Motions
- Keeping Members Informed of Motions & Progress

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Methods for Taking & Verifying Votes

- Unanimous Consent
- “Voice” Votes
- Counted Votes & Roll Call Votes
- Secret Ballots

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Contingencies for Technical Difficulties

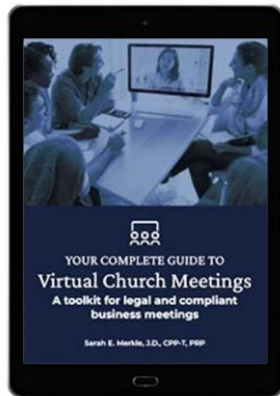
- “Noisy” Members
- Dedicated Hotline – Reachable by Phone & Text
- Waiver for Failed Connection

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Who Cares?



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Your Complete Guide to Virtual Church Meetings

A downloadable step-by-step guide to determining whether virtual business meetings are permitted for your organization, making decisions when virtual business meetings are not an option, and preparing to hold a compliant virtual business meeting.

Available for purchase on ChurchLawAndTaxStore.com.

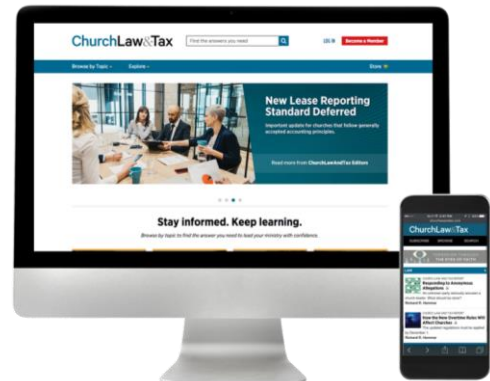
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Thank You!



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