



VIDEO CONFERENCING POLICY

Corporate Services Directorate

61 Blyth Street

Butterworth, 4960

Telephone (047) 050 1391

Website: www.mnquma.gov.za

MNQUMA MUNICIPALITY
P.O. BOX 36, BUTTERWORTH 4960

2023 -05- 30

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

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1. PREAMBLE

WHEREAS In order to enable and enhance the productivity of the municipality's strategic business units, it is critical that we respond to daily modern industry requirements in the use of sound and latest means of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

WHEREAS The Municipality currently uses video conferencing to conduct meetings and deliver workshop sessions as part of its commitment to providing appropriate environment that is not harmful to the health or well-being of its employees. This has been expressly critical during the Covid-19 National State of Disaster.

WHEREAS This policy will therefore set guidelines for office and (working from) home use of virtual platforms as an enabling productivity tool, it is important that staff understand the risks and best practices involved.

NOW THEREFORE be it enacted by Council, as Video Conferencing Policy.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996, Section 195 (1) (a) (b) & (g) states that:

"Public Administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles:

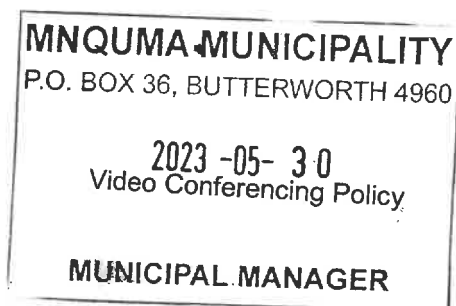
- (a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained,*
- (b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted,*

2.2. Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Act 108 of 1996, section 152(1)(b) lists:

"(d) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and to exercise the powers and functions of Municipalities as set out in section 156 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;"

2.3. Mquma Local Municipality's Work From Home Policy (Section 6[d]) states that:

- b) In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, especially with non-municipal parties (e.g. candidate interviews, disciplinary hearings etc.).*



3. NAMES, DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

3.1 Names and Definitions

Name	Definitions
"Municipality"	Mnquma Local Municipality as determined by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996 Section 155 (1) (b).
"Municipal Manager"	The person appointed by council as the head of the administration of the municipal council as prescribed in terms of Section 54(A) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000.
"Councillors and Traditional Leaders"	Shall mean members of the Municipality's Council.
"Director"	<p>A manager directly accountable to a municipal manager in terms of a written employment contract complying with the provisions of Section 57 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000.</p> <p>Also referred to in this policy as "relevant director" or "Head of Directorate" or "System Owner".</p>
"Video conferencing"	<p>Is a technology that allows users in different locations to hold face-to-face meetings without having to move to a single location together.</p> <p>The term will be synonymous with "Virtual meeting".</p>
"User"	<p>Councillor, Traditional leader or official who uses a municipal ICT working tool to join virtual meetings.</p> <p>Also referred to as "attendees" except in the case of external stakeholders.</p>
"Internet"	The municipality's internet shall be used as another delivery channel to offer communication and information to municipality constituents and potential constituents and, work related world wide web (www) access for employees.
"Email Address"	A unique identifier for an email account used to both send and receive email, municipal messages over the Internet.



“Backup resource”	A municipal employee assigned the duties of standing in to host when the “Hosting Employee” is not available due to an emergency.
“Host computer”	A notebook, laptop, a tablet or handheld personal computer used to host a virtual meeting.
“Home Working”	Is about using the employee’s home as a base for work instead of the employee coming into a workplace.
“Zoombombing”	Is when an uninvited person joins a Zoom meeting.
“Covid-19”	A disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.'
“Virtual”	Not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so.

3.2 Acronyms

ACRONYMS

ICT Information and Communication Technology

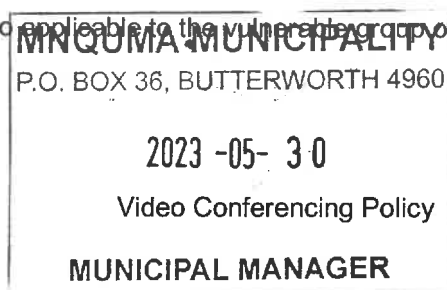
4. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is:

- 4.1 Give all the municipality’s video conference users guidelines on what conduct is required/expected during virtual meetings as well as procedures for using video conferencing.

5. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

- 5.1 This policy shall apply to Councillors, Traditional Leaders and Officials of the municipality, as well as external stakeholders who are required to attend work meetings, workshops, disciplinary hearings, interviews, etc. whether in office or out of office.
- 5.2 This Policy is also applicable to the vulnerable group of employees that fall in the following categories:



- i) Persons aged 60 years and above.
- ii) Those with underlying serious medical condition/s.
- iii) Employees on quarantine.
- iv) Non-essential services employees where office space does not allow 1.5meter social distancing.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 The Municipal Manager

The Municipal Manager shall monitor implementation of this policy through Director responsible for ICT.

1.2 System owner (Head of the Directorate)

1.2.1 The Director responsible for the system shall make all employees and Councillors aware of this policy and ensure adherence thereof.

1.2.2 He/she will apply control as set out in this policy in approving directorate requests for Municipal virtual software users.

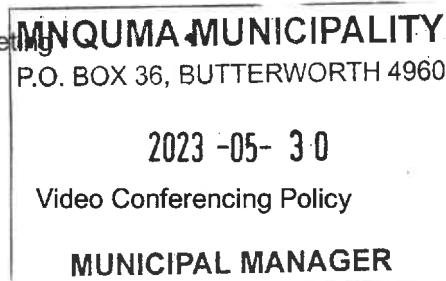
1.3 Municipal Councillors, Traditional Leaders and Officials

a) All Municipal Councillors, Traditional Leaders and Officials are expected to adhere to the provisions of this policy.

7. CURRENTLY SUPPORTED PLATFORMS

- a) At this time, the municipality will use Zoom only as its licenced video conferencing platform for municipal business.
- b) Due to the wide variety of platforms out there, the municipality allows its users to 'join' meetings hosted by other institutions via the following platforms:

- Microsoft Teams
- Jitsi Meet
- BlueJeans Meetings
- GoToMeeting
- Intermedia AnyMeeting
- Zoho Meeting
- Cisco WebEx



- Join.Me
- Google Hangouts Meet / Google Meet
- Slack
- Skype
- FreeConferenceCall
- Adobe Connect
- Amazon Chime
- RingCentral Meetings
- ON24
- BigBlueButton
- ClickMeeting
- Pexip
- Digitell

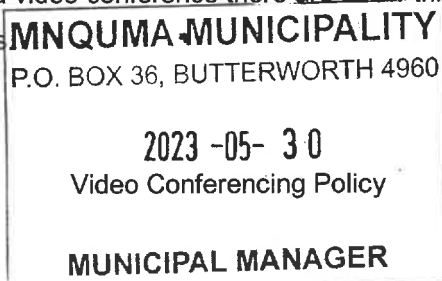
8. HOSTING OF MEETINGS

- a) The municipality must procure licenses to be distributed and assigned to various offices to host meetings independently.
- b) Each directorate will have an official assigned to host its meetings, as well as Council Support and the Troika offices.
- c) The chosen officials will be trained to host virtual meetings, including the necessary admin, e.g. creation and sending of a meeting link, recording and screenshots of participants.
- d) Each official will have their own unique login details to host virtual meetings and these must be managed in line with the municipality's Password Policy.
- e) It is the responsibility of the hosting official to transfer the skill to a colleague who must serve as a backup resource in the event that the hosting employee is not available.

2. BEST PRACTICE AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

2.1. General Rules

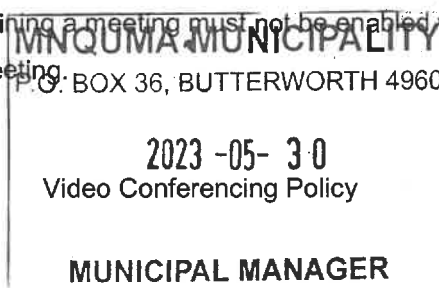
- a) Physical meeting conduct on the rules and behaviour still applies for virtual meeting attendance.
- b) When setting up for a video conference there are a few things to be considered by the meeting participants



- i. Internet Connection – Internet must be fast enough for video; else video must be disabled.
 - ii. Location – Users must avoid locations with network challenges resulting in an unable connection to virtual meetings.
 - iii. Background – Users must be mindful at all times about both video and audio background distraction during proceedings of a virtual meeting: including eating, other people in the house, kids, pets that could make an unscheduled appearance/noise and any other inappropriate activities that may impede the professional conduct on proceedings.
 - iv. Names – attendees must apply a uniform way of assigning their names when they join virtual meetings, i.e. initial/first name and surname.
 - v. Confidentiality – Subject to the nature of the meeting, attendees must take all reasonable steps to ensure confidentiality of virtual meetings.
- c) In order to get the best audio quality, users must minimize activation of video during meetings.

2.2. Meeting Preparation, Link and Hosting

- a) Procedures and principles that apply to preparation of physical meetings still remain for virtual meetings.
- b) The hosting official must be on the host computer from the start of the meeting until the end.
- c) In order to avoid Zoombombing, the meeting link must be sent to participants not 60 minutes earlier than the meeting start time while not 30 minutes later than the start time.
- d) Only the hosting official may send a meeting link.
- e) Meeting attendees are not allowed to share the meeting ID and password under any conditions.
- f) It is the responsibility of an attendee to notify the hosting official when his/her email address is not working; the meeting host must make alternative means in this regard.
- g) For meeting protection, it is advised that the host manually allows attendees into the meeting. Automating joining a meeting must not be enabled when external stakeholders are to be part of the meeting.



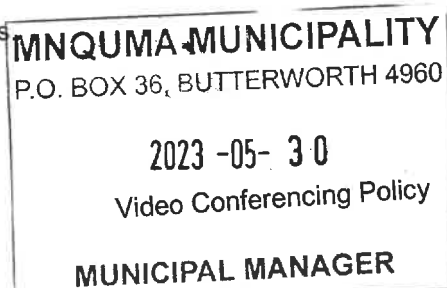
- h) The hosting official must ensure that all official meetings are recorded for minute compiling.
- i) The hosting official must make a screenshot of the meetings attendees, which will serve as an attendance register.
- j) Only in special circumstances with no alternative means can a Cellphone be used to host work meetings.
- k) Hosting official must leave an authorized backup resource to take care of hosting during an emergency.

2.3. Meeting Proceedings

- a) Meeting participants who need to share documents/presentations from their own screens may be granted this by the host, and the only screen that must be shared is the application window required in the meeting.
- b) Once all attendees are present, lock the meeting preventing anyone else from joining.
- c) Use of the "Hands Up" feature rather than allowing attendees to use the chat (text) during meetings must be encouraged to avoid distractions and prevent anyone from posting something they should not post.
- d) In order to manage storage space, recording must be stored locally (into the computer storage) and not on the cloud.
- e) Any meetings that are initially recorded on the cloud platform must be moved and safely stored locally.
- f) In order to preserve storage space, hosting officials are advised to delete previous meeting recordings as soon as its minutes are confirmed.

3. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- a) For all technical challenges and system glitches, ICT must be contacted to provide technical support.
- b) Hosting officials are encouraged to regularly utilize the online video trainings for refresher purposes



4. SOFTWARE LICENSING

- a) Only software that has been licensed by the Municipality may be used to host institutional meetings.

5. COMPLIANCE

- a) The relevant Directors are required to ensure that internal audit mechanisms exist to monitor and measure compliance with this policy.
- b) Any conduct that interferes with the normal and proper operation of the Municipality's ICT systems, which adversely affects the ability of other users to use those ICT systems, or which is harmful or offensive to other users, shall constitute violation of approved ICT policies.
- c) The Municipality's management reserves the right to revoke the privileges of any user at any time.

6. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

The Municipal Council must approve this policy and any amendment thereof.

7. REVIEWAL OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed annually.

8. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

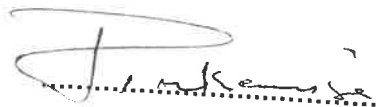
This policy was adopted by Council on the 30th May 2023 as per resolution number SCM6/23/007.1.3.3

AUTHENTICATION



S. MAHLASELA

MUNICIPAL MANAGER



T. MANXILA-NKAMISA

EXECUTIVE MAYOR

