

DUNN TOWNSHIP, OTTER TAIL COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Presiding Officer Statement Regarding Holding Meetings via Telephone or Other Electronic Means

As Board Chair and Presiding Officer for Dunn Township (“Town”), I find as follows:

- a. The spread of COVID-19 within the United States has raised serious public health concerns and resulted in a great deal of uncertainty since much remains unknown about the virus and how it spreads.
- b. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization determined the outbreak constitutes a pandemic. On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a national state of emergency as a result of the pandemic.
- c. On March 13, 2020, Governor Tim Walz declared a state of peacetime emergency to address the coronavirus pandemic in the State of Minnesota. The Governor’s declaration triggered activation of Otter Tail County’s emergency management plan and enabled Otter Tail County to exercise its emergency powers as needed to respond to the emergency.
- d. The Minnesota Department of Health has provided specific guidance encouraging the limiting of events that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person, which is not practical to achieve in the Town Hall.
- e. On March 16, 2020, President Donald Trump announced additional guidelines meant to slow the spread of COVID-19, including avoiding gatherings of people in groups of more than ten. Meetings of the Town’s Board of Supervisors (“Town Board”) are routinely attended by more than ten people.
- f. On March 17, 2020, Otter Tail County formally declared a state of emergency, and on March 18, 2020, the County began limiting access to all public buildings effective immediately and until further notice.
- g. On March 25, 2020, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 20-20, which requires people to stay home except to engage in certain exempted activities or to perform work in areas designated as “critical sector” work. On April 8, 2020, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 20-33, extending Executive Order 20-20 to May 4, 2020.
- h. As of April 10, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Health reported 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- i. Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.021 authorizes townships to meet by telephone or other electronic means in the case of a health pandemic or when an emergency has been declared if the presiding officer, chief legal counsel, or chief administrative officer determines meeting in person is not practical or prudent. The statute also allows these officers to

determine it is not feasible to require any members of the Town Board or staff to be present in the Town Hall during a meeting.

- j. Given the uncertainties associated with COVID-19 and its spread and in accordance with the terms and goals of Executive Order 20-20, conducting in-person Town Board meetings is not practical or prudent, and it is not feasible to require any Town Board member or staff to be present in the Town Hall during the meetings. The Town's goal is to slow the spread of COVID-19 within the Town and holding meetings via telephone and electronic means allows the Town to accomplish this goal while still conducting the Town's business.

Based on the above findings, I hereby determine and state as follows:

1. Until this statement is terminated due to the end of the pandemic or the Governor's emergency declaration, Town Board meetings and, to the extent they are held, all meetings of Town boards, committees and commissions, shall be conducted by telephone or other electronic means in a manner satisfying the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.021.
2. The Town Hall will not be open to the public to attend the meetings.
3. Town Board members and the chief legal counsel are not required to be present in the meeting room during meetings.
4. Before each meeting, notice will be provided regarding how the public may listen to or view meetings as they are being conducted.
5. All votes occurring at the meetings shall be conducted by roll call.

Dated this 13th day of April, 2020.

David Johnson, Town Chairperson