

Public Involvement and Communications Committee Draft Advice

Topic: Effective Virtual Public Meetings

Authors: Jeff Burright, Shannon Cram, Susan Leckband, Liz Mattson, Gerry Pollet

Originating Committee: PIC

Version #42 1005620: Color: __pink__yellow__green__orange__purple__blue__goldenrod

Background Advice:

~~The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has introduced extraordinary new challenges to the Hanford cleanup. Among these is the challenge of maintaining effective public engagement as a necessary part of regulatory processes and site decision-making.~~

The Hanford Advisory Board appreciates the efforts of the Tri-Party Agencies to continue holding public meetings and adapting the meeting formats to accommodate virtual participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. ~~Unforeseen circumstances, such as pandemics and weather conditions, present a challenge to effective~~ Among these is the challenge of maintaining effective public involvement engagement which is as a necessary part of regulatory processes and site decision-making.

~~The Board was encouraged by the data provided by DOE during the most recent virtual full board meeting, which showed that the virtual meetings have been better attended than many of the in-person meetings of the last few years. While the shift suggested by the recent data is encouraging, numerical attendance does not necessarily indicate increased or improved public engagement. While the Board prefers in-person meetings, continuing to improve virtual meeting formats is helpful for increasing public engagement when we cannot attend in-person.~~

Advice:

- The Board advises the agencies to engage in an ongoing conversation with the Board for continuous improvement of the virtual public meeting format.

~~The Board has long maintained that the public involvement effort is an important part of the Hanford mission and should strive to invite public participation beyond the regular members of the Board. While the shift suggested by the recent data is encouraging, numerical attendance does not necessarily indicate increased or improved public engagement. The Board continues to value in-person meetings for most Hanford public interactions, while being open to continuing to explore the potential benefits of virtual formats for certain types of meetings. The Board is also in favor of using this time to experiment with virtual meeting formats with a goal of maintaining as many of the aspects of in-person meetings as possible that help participants feel engaged and connected to the Hanford cleanup and each other.~~

- The Board advises the agencies to consider the following recommendations points of guidance in hopes of spurring continuous improvement of virtual public meetings going forward. The Board requests the Tri Party Agencies to consider this guidance and either incorporate suggestions on a trial basis, or else provide justification why the suggestion is not feasible.

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Not Bold, Not Italic

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Not Bold, Not Italic

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Not Bold, Not Italic

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Not Bold, Not Italic

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Not Italic

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: List Paragraph

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

Formatted: List Paragraph

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: List Paragraph, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

Public Involvement and Communications Committee Draft Advice

Topic: Effective Virtual Public Meetings

Authors: Jeff Burrigh, Shannon Cram, Susan Leckband, Liz Mattson, Gerry Pollet

Originating Committee: PIC

Version #42 1005620: Color: __pink__yellow__green__orange__purple__blue__goldenrod

Recommendations/Guidance	Rationale/Additional Information
When someone who asks a question loses their connection, <u>allow time for response upon return/wait for them to come back on.</u>	Participants with questions should have the opportunity to hear the answer and ask a follow-up
Take measures to ensure meeting content is accessible to hearing impaired and sight impaired. Ensure meeting content is accessible to hearing impaired and sight impaired.	<p><u>Continue current notices of access to hearing and sight impaired availability on all virtual meeting notice documents.</u></p> <p><u>However, several services/platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams) can accommodate instantaneous closed captioning; ensure all presentations can be zoomed in or have electronic copies available for download.</u></p>
Meetings should have no end time (within reason) if there is still public input or questions. Ensure meetings are scheduled to have adequate time for everyone to comment or have questions answered, similar to in-person meetings.	Scheduled end times can be conservatively extended in public notices to ensure adequate time for questions and answers.
Consider showing slides before the start of meetings with helpful tips about presentation zoom, camera, controls, etc.	Including screenshots, arrows, or other markers might help participants find controls.
Communicate the whole context and arena surrounding the specific scope discussed at a public meeting. Help the public locate specific actions within the larger story of cleanup.	Examples discussed were the <u>Vitrified Low Activity Waste (VLAW) Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (VLAW-WIR)</u> meeting, which offered much contextual information, versus the 242-A Evaporator permit modification meeting which lacked key information (e.g., the evaporator is currently non-functional, potential safety considerations of the project, the plan for four penetrations instead of only the three discussed at the meeting)
Allow public members to attend anonymously (should this extend to chat comments and questions also?)	In-person meetings encourage but do not require public members to sign in unless they wish to make a comment. Some accommodation for anonymous viewing seems reasonable, with an option to provide comment if the person provides a name. Potential

Formatted Table

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Highlight

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Public Involvement and Communications Committee Draft Advice

Topic: Effective Virtual Public Meetings

Authors: Jeff Burright, Shannon Cram, Susan Leckband, Liz Mattson, Gerry Pollet

Originating Committee: PIC

Version #42 1005620: Color: __pink__yellow__green__orange__purple__blue__goldenrod

	<u>alternative is to post meeting videos for anonymous viewing afterward.</u>
All participants who wish to identify themselves should be visible to all other participants	Meetings to date have not allowed participants to see who else is in attendance. This limits opportunities for networking, discussion, public involvement tracking, etc. and causes a loss of a key benefit of an in-person meeting.
Allow conversations in the chat box to be visible to all participants. An ability to have sidebar conversations without being too disruptive would also be of benefit.	Provides accountability for questions and answers, allows members of the public to interact similar to conversations during an in-person meeting. We recognize concerns about potential distraction from speakers but respectfully request that this function be enabled on a trial basis.
To the extent possible, schedule virtual public meetings <u>to begin</u> after 5:00 PM	Preserving evening meeting times may increase public participation from those people working regular schedules.
Encourage all participants, including presenters, to show video of themselves while presenting.	<u>Connection between participants and visual cues</u>
Stay current on what technologies are allowable for use by federal government from a security standpoint. Be at the forefront of trying new technological options.	For example, security issues with Zoom have apparently been resolved for government use. Other technologies to consider incorporating into public meetings include Mural, Reddit (specifically “Ask Me Anything” discussion formats); Microsoft Teams; video captioning services (YouTube , Panopto , Canvas)
Adjust the meeting and presentation format to include public participant check ins and involvement opportunities.	Examples include live polls; open-ended questions for participants; a guided post-meeting discussion forum (to replicate the post-meeting milling around feeling);
Update the Hanford Public Involvement Plan to include guidelines for virtual public meetings	<u>Capture best practice in a publicly accessible document.</u>
Provide an opportunity for alternative viewpoints from public interest groups, local/state government, tribes, or other non-Federal parties during virtual meetings.	The Public Involvement Plan in the TPA describes that alternative viewpoints will commonly have an opportunity to be heard during Hanford public events.
Provide and make readily available a PDF glossary of common terms and acronyms as	<u>Makes the complex language of Hanford cleanup more accessible to the public.</u>

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Public Involvement and Communications Committee Draft Advice

Topic: Effective Virtual Public Meetings

Authors: Jeff Burrigh, Shannon Cram, Susan Leckband, Liz Mattson, Gerry Pollet

Originating Committee: PIC

Version #42 1005620: Color: __pink__yellow__green__orange__purple__blue__goldenrod

supplemental materials for each public meeting.	
Record virtual meetings and make them available for public viewing after the event.	Virtual meetings with integrated recording options provide a new opportunity to increase engagement with people who cannot attend meetings live.
<u>Consider hybrid in person and virtual meetings (after COVID)</u>	<u>Improve the experience for remote participants and greater remote presence</u>
<u>Have consolidated visual and computer audio available for virtual meetings, in addition to the ability to call in with a telephone alone</u>	<u>Provide multiple options for connecting to a virtual meeting, does not tie up land line phones for people calling in from home, and makes it easier to record meetings</u>

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

The Board is open to providing feedback to the TPA agencies as any of these items are implemented through its Public Involvement and Communications Committee.

DRAFT