Hybrid Congregational Meeting Requirements and Recommendations

Rev. Brian Wallace, Associate Minister to Pittsburgh Presbytery.

A hybrid meeting is one where a group of individuals is gathered together with additional individuals participating online. With the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid meetings will be necessary for congregations for the foreseeable future.

The requirements, according to our polity, for a hybrid meeting (regardless of the size of the group) are as follows:

1. Those present and those online must be able to hear each other. It is not acceptable to rely on someone sharing the viewpoints presented by someone online.
2. The Moderator must be able to recognize those who wish to speak both in-person and online.
3. Voting methods must permit full voting privileges to both groups of people.

A relatively simple model for a hybrid meeting would be as follows:

1. Use an interactive meeting platform such as Zoom, RingCentral Meetings, WebEx, etc.
2. Assure by roll call of online attendees that each attendee is able to access the chosen means of speaking and voting – able to mute/unmute, to post to Chat, to use the Raise Hand and Vote features of the online platform, etc.
3. Two persons at the in-person meeting also sign in to the online meeting. One of the two is the Moderator, and the other is designated as the “Online Host” for the meeting, who manages technical aspects of the meeting.
4. Everyone who is gathered in-person **must** use a microphone when they speak, so those participating online have the best chance of hearing.
5. If someone online wishes to speak, the Online Host holds a handheld microphone to the computer’s speaker so everyone can hear what the person has to say. (This isn’t the most elegant solution, but it is the simplest.)
6. The Moderator’s primary focus is on the in-person meeting, while the Online Host focuses on the online meeting.
7. The Moderator periodically checks in with the Online Host to ensure full participation by those online.
8. For most votes, the Moderator can use any of the following voting methods. (We do not recommend using voice votes as that is not conducive to online participation.)
	1. “.... are there any objections?”
	2. “.... all in favor raise your hand.” (and invite online users to either visually raise their hands or use the raise hand function)
	3. Mentimeter - For votes that require a secret ballot, the Presbytery has a subscription to an online voting service called Mentimeter. If you’re interested in using this service, please contact a member of the Presbytery staff. You can learn more at [www.mentimeter.com](http://www.mentimeter.com).

During hybrid meetings, the Moderator must be aware that there is a slight delay in actual reception by those participating online, and that they are not able to react as quickly as those in person. The Moderator must pause to allow sufficient time to permit those online to react.

If you have further questions about the technical aspects hybrid meetings, please contact Rev. Brian Wallace (bwallace@pghpresbytery.org). If you have further questions regarding the polity concerns of hybrid meetings, please contact Stated Clerk Carla Campbell (ccampbell@pghpresbytery.org)