

BY - LAWS
FLUVANNA COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Amended September 16, 2025

I. OBJECTIVES; READOPTION AND AMENDMENT

This Board of Zoning Appeals, established pursuant to an ordinance adopted by the Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors and effective on the 1st day January 1974, adopted the following provisions in order to facilitate its powers and duties in accordance with (Chapter 11, Title 15, Article 8, Section 15.1-495 Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended). These Bylaws are hereby amended and readopted pursuant to Title 15.2, Subtitle II, Ch. 22, Art. 7 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, and are effective on and after February 6, 2023.

II. TITLE

The official title of this board shall be the Fluvanna County Board of Zoning Appeals.

III. RULES FOR MEMBERS

Members having any interest or personal concern over a case shall so state and shall disqualify themselves from acting on that case; and shall, in all cases, comply with the Code of Virginia regarding conflicts of interests (Title 2.2, Subtitle I, Part E, Ch. 31).

IV. SELECTION OF OFFICERS

The officers of the Board of Zoning Appeals shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary who shall be elected by the board in accordance with Virginia Code Sec. 15.2-2308-C. The secretary may or may not be a member of the board.

Each officer shall be elected for a term of one year and may be reelected; except that the secretary, if not a member of the board, may be appointed for an indefinite term and continue office during the pleasure of the board.

Nominations shall be made by members from the floor at the first regular meeting of each calendar year. A candidate receiving a majority vote of the entire membership of the board shall be declared elected and take office immediately and serve for one year or until his successor shall take office. Vacancies in office shall be filled immediately by regular election procedures.

V. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The chairman shall be a citizen member of the Board of Zoning Appeals and shall preside at all meetings for the board; sign all actions passed by the board certifying that the same were duly adopted. After his signature is affixed to any action, the same shall be considered immediately entered as a public record.

The vice chairman shall be a citizen member of the board and shall act in the absence or inability of the chairman to act; and shall have the powers to function in the same capacity of the chairman in cases of the chairman's inability to act.

The secretary shall keep a written record of all business transacted by the board;
Notify all members and other parties as the chairman may direct on all meetings;
Keep a file of all official records and reports of the board;
Certify all maps, records and reports of the board;
Serve notice of all hearings and public meetings;
Attend to correspondence of the board as hereinafter prescribed;
Keep a set of minutes as hereinafter prescribed, together with a verbatim record of all proceedings of the board; and
Prepare and be responsible for the publishing of notices and advertisements relating to public hearings in section VI of these By- Laws.

VI. MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Board of Zoning Appeals shall be held the third Tuesday of the month beginning at 6:00 P.M except as provided by a majority vote of the board.

When a meeting date falls on a legal holiday, the meeting shall be held on the following day unless otherwise designated by the chairman.

Special meetings may be called at the request of a quorum of the membership or by the chairman when appropriate work load require same to be held. Written notice of meetings shall be given to each member at least five days prior to such meetings and shall state the purpose and time of the meeting. Such notice may be delivered by regular mail or by electronic transmission, to the extent authorized by the addressee.

All regular hearings, records, and accounts shall be open to the public as provided by law. Closed meetings may be held in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Title 2.2, Subtitle II, Part B, Ch. 37).

A majority of the membership of the board shall constitute a quorum. The board shall fix a reasonable time for the hearing of an application or appeal, give public notice thereof pursuant to Virginia Code Sec. 15.2-2311, shall, in addition, cause such notice to be advertised in accordance with the provisions of Virginia Code Sec. 2204, and shall decide the same within ninety (90) days. In exercising its powers, the board may reverse or affirm, wholly or partly, or may modify the order, requirement, decision, or determination appealed from. The concurring vote of a majority of all members shall be necessary to reverse any order, requirement, and decision, or determination of an administrative officer or to decide in favor of the applicant or any matter upon which it is required to pass under the ordinance or to effect any variance from the zoning ordinance. Voting shall be by roll call, and a record of the vote shall be kept as a part of the minutes.

Except as otherwise expressly provided by these Bylaws or by law, procedures for meetings of the board shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, 12th Edition.

VII. POLICY FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF THE FLUVANNA COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS AT MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

A. Authority and Scope

1. This policy shall govern participation by an individual member of the Board of Zoning Appeals of Fluvanna County, Virginia, by electronic communication means in public meetings of the Board of Zoning Appeals of Fluvanna County, Virginia, and any closed session of the Board held in accordance with applicable law, from and after the date of adoption of this policy.
2. This policy is adopted pursuant to the authorization of Va. Code § 2.2-3708.3 and is to be strictly construed in conformance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Va. Code § 2.2-3700 et seq.
3. Any reference to a specific provision of federal, state, or local law referenced in this policy shall mean such provision of law, as amended from time to time, or as set forth in any successor provision dealing with substantially the same subject.

B. Definitions

1. **“Caregiver” means a caregiver as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.**
2. “Member” means any member of the Board of Zoning Appeals
3. “Remote participation” means participation by an individual member of the Board by electronic communication means in a public meeting where a quorum of the Board is physically assembled, as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701. **For purposes of determining whether a quorum is physically assembled, an individual member who is a person with a disability as defined in Va. Code § 51.5-40.1 or is a caregiver as defined in Va. Code § 2.2-3701 and uses remote participation counts toward the quorum as if the individual was physically present.**
4. “Meeting” means a meeting as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
5. “Notify” or “notifies,” for purposes of this policy, means verbal or written notice that is reasonable under the circumstances, with written notice, such as by email or letter, being the preferred means of notice. Notwithstanding the foregoing, notice does not include text messages or communications via social media.
6. “VFOIA” means the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Va. Code § 2.2-3700, et seq.

C. Mandatory Requirements

Regardless of the reasons why the member is participating in a meeting from a remote location by electronic communication means, the following conditions must be met for the member to participate remotely:

1. A quorum of the Board must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location; and
2. Arrangements have been made for the voice of the remotely participating member to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. If at any point during the meeting the voice of the remotely participating member is no longer able to be heard by all persons at the meeting location, the remotely participating member shall no longer be permitted to participate remotely.
3. **For purposes of determining whether a quorum is physically assembled, an individual member who is a person with a disability as defined in Va. Code § 51.5-40.1 or is a caregiver and uses remote participation counts toward the quorum as if the individual was physically present.**

D. Process to Request Remote Participation

1. On or before the day of the meeting, and at any point before the meeting begins, the requesting member must notify the Board Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting member is the Chair) that such member is physically unable to attend a meeting due to (i) a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance, (ii) a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care for such family member, thereby preventing the member's physical attendance, **or the member is a caregiver who must provide care for a person with a disability at the time the public meeting is being held thereby preventing the member's physical attendance,** (iii) such member's principal residence location more than 60 miles from the meeting location, or (iv) a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter.
2. If the requesting member is unable physically to attend the meeting due to a personal matter, the requesting member must state with specificity the nature of the personal matter and that such matter renders the requesting member unable physically to attend. Remote participation due to a personal matter is limited each calendar year to two meetings or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. There is no limit to the number of times that a member may participate remotely for the other authorized purposes listed in (i) - (iii) above.
3. The requesting member is not obligated to provide independent verification regarding the reason for such member's nonattendance, including the temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition or the family member's medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance at the meeting.
4. The Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting member is the Chair) shall promptly notify the requesting member whether the request is in conformance with this policy, and therefore approved or disapproved.

E. Process to Confirm Approval or Disapproval of Participation from a Remote Location

When a quorum of the Board has assembled for the meeting, the Board shall vote to determine whether:

1. The Chair's decision to approve or disapprove the requesting member's request to participate from a remote location was in conformance with this policy; and
2. The voice of the remotely participating member can be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

F. Recording in Minutes

1. If the member is allowed to participate remotely due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care to the family member, **or the member is a caregiver who must provide care for a person with a disability**, or because the member's principal residence is located more than 60 miles from the meeting location the Board shall record in its minutes (1) the foregoing circumstance due to which the member is participating remotely; (2) the Board's approval of the member's remote participation; and (3) a general description of the remote location from which the member participated.
2. If the member is allowed to participate remotely due to a personal matter, the Board shall record in its minutes (1) the specific nature of such personal matter that renders the requesting member unable to attend stated by the requesting member; (2) how many times the member has attended remotely due to a personal matter; (3) the Board's approval of the member's remote participation; and (4) a general description of the remote location from which the member participated.
3. If a member's request to participate remotely is disapproved, the disapproval, including the grounds upon which the requested participation violates this policy or VFOIA, shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

G. Closed Session

If the Board goes into closed session, the member may continue to participate remotely in the closed session, and shall ensure that no third party is able to hear or otherwise observe the closed meeting.

H. Strict and Uniform Application of this Policy

This Policy shall be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership, and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting. Unless independently received by County staff, the Chair (or Vice-Chair) shall provide County staff with copies of the member's written request

to participate remotely and the written response, as applicable, if the request or response is in writing, to be retained by County staff for a period of one year, or other such time required by records retention laws, regulations, and policies.

I. Meetings Held Through Electronic Communication Means During Declared States of Emergency

1. In addition to the foregoing, pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(2) the Board of Zoning Appeals may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with the Code of Virginia Section 44-146.17, or Fluvanna County has declared a local state of emergency pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 44-146.21, provided that (i) the catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location and (ii) the purpose of the meeting is to address the emergency provide for the continuity of operations of the Board or the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. The Board of Zoning Appeals when convening a meeting in accordance with this subdivision (I) shall:
 - a. Give public notice using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the Board of Zoning Appeals conducting the meeting;
 - b. Make arrangements for public access to such meeting through electronic communication means;
 - c. Provide the public with the opportunity to comment at those meetings of the Commission when public comment is customarily received;
 - d. Otherwise comply with the provisions of the Code of VFOIA; and
 - e. State in its minutes the nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means, and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.
- J. Nothing in this Section VII shall be construed to prohibit the use of interactive audio or video means to expand public participation.

VIII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business for a regular meeting shall be:

1. Call to order by the chairman;
2. Roll call;
3. Determination of quorum;
4. Approval of minutes;
5. Report of the secretary;

6. Report of special committees (if any);
7. Unfinished business;
8. Public hearings;
9. Closed meeting (if any);
10. Adjournment

The secretary shall take down motions as accurately as possible to reflect the intent of the board. Any member may require that the secretary read back each motion before a vote is taken. The names of the persons making and seconding motions shall be recorded by the secretary.

The Board of Zoning Appeals shall keep a set of all minutes for all regular, adjourned and special meetings as well as committee meetings.

The secretary shall sign all minutes and certify copies following the adoption of the minutes with any corrections.

IX. HEARINGS

In addition to those required by law the board may at its discretion hold public hearings when it decides such hearings will be in the public's interest.

The chairman of the board may administer oaths and compel the attendance of witnesses. The secretary shall notify the parties in interest and the Zoning Administrator of its decision.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

It shall be the duty of the secretary to draft and sign all correspondence necessary for the Board. It shall be the duty of the secretary to communicate by writing, by telephone or by electronic communication as authorized by these Bylaws or by law whenever necessary to make communications that cannot be carried out as rapidly as required through direct correspondence.

All official papers and plans involving the authority of the board shall bear the signature of the chairman or acting chairman. Copies of same shall be certified by the secretary.

XI. AMENDMENTS

These rules may be changed by a majority vote of the entire membership.

The board may temporarily suspend any of the rules by a unanimous vote of members present.