



Zones 26 & 27  
Big West

## Conducting a “Hybrid” In-person/Zoom (or other videoconferencing software) Rotary Club meeting

During this time of Covid-19 many Rotary Clubs have been holding “virtual” club meetings and social events to stay connected with their members using videoconferencing software such as Zoom. Many clubs have found that this approach to be very effective as a way to stay in touch with their members (and provide a way for Rotarians to stay connected to each other), and in many cases have discovered that this approach to conducting meetings actually enhanced the Rotary experience for members who (even without a pandemic) would have been unable to participate in club meetings or other events due to work or personal travel or other circumstances.

Many Rotary clubs are now considering offering in-person meetings for their members, either in lieu of or in combination with a continuation of videoconferencing (that combination of in-person and videoconferencing being commonly referred to as “hybrid” meetings). This document is designed to provide some things for clubs to consider as they move toward some form of in-person meetings, including some suggestions on hardware configuration and operations of computers in connection with a hybrid club meeting.

### **As clubs contemplate implementing in-person meetings again, we ask clubs to:**

- Continue to follow the requirements and recommendations of their local Department of Health.
- Work closely with the venue where you hold your Rotary meetings to determine how best to configure and utilize your meeting space.
- Continue to offer a videoconferencing option for members who choose or are otherwise unable to participate in person – the “hybrid” meeting approach.

- Avoid creating two classes of meeting participants with a preference to in-person meeting attendees. Make a conscious effort to incorporate online participants into the meeting.
- Do what you can to encourage and assist members who are not comfortable attending in-person meetings but are also not “tech savvy.” They may need your assistance getting more comfortable with their online participation.

### **Nuts and Bolts of Managing a “Hybrid” Meeting**

- The following are some tips for using videoconferencing in a hybrid Rotary Club meeting:
- Make sure your meeting space is configured with strong Wi-Fi capabilities.
- Utilize at least two Wi-Fi capable devices in the room (laptops seem to work best) Both devices will log into the meeting using the videoconference app you are using.
- One device will be located at the podium (the “Podium Laptop”). The Podium Laptop will be logged in as a “participant” to the videoconference (not the host of the meeting with meeting controls).
- A separate smart phone will utilize its camera and built-in microphone to pick up the video and audio of the speaker at the podium.
- For larger spaces, you will want a separate microphone going directly into the smartphone.
- The Podium Laptop will have a “video out” cable attaching the laptop to a projector or video display in the room. That video will be for the benefit of in-person meeting attendees.
- The second laptop (the “Host Laptop”) will be located at the back of the room. That laptop will be the “host” of the videoconference session.
- The person operating the Host Laptop will be responsible for monitoring participants who fail to mute their own microphone and for other videoconferencing controls.

- The Host Laptop should be placed as far from the Podium Device as possible in order to avoid a feedback loop. Speaker volume on the Host Laptop should be kept off in order to minimize feedback (or have that audio go to headphones).
- The Host Laptop will also have any PowerPoint programs or other audio/video programs for the meeting loaded on it, and the operator of the Host Laptop will “share screen” with in the videoconference, which will also result in the Podium Laptop having the PowerPoint displayed on the screen at the front of the room.
- If you include a Q&A as part of your speaker’s presentation, be sure to remind the speaker to repeat any questions coming from in-person participants so that videoconference participants can hear the question. The person operating the Host Laptop will also be responsible for monitoring the “chat” in the videoconference to pick up questions submitted by videoconference participants.
- Consider “opening” the videoconference early so that Rotarians participating in the meeting have the opportunity to “talk amongst themselves” before the start of the meeting.
- Build in time before your first hybrid meeting to test the system to make sure it works well and you are comfortable running the hardware and software.

Perhaps you have already figured out another system that works for your club. If you have some interesting tips of your own, please share them with us.

(These suggestions liberally borrowed from Rotary District 6690)