WISCOM Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Index #	105.00
Type	Policy
Subject	Teleconference/Videoconference Meetings
Approved	Approved by the SSMG on 09/24/2010
Revised	N/A

Purpose

This policy is intended to enhance communication, professionalism, and efficiency while using the teleconferencing and videoconferencing meeting platforms. By using a systematic approach to this technology all three of these goals will be achieved.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all State System Management Group (SSMG) regular business meetings and special meetings called by the chairperson, where the teleconferencing or video-conferencing meeting format is utilized, and a quorum of the members is required to conduct business. This policy does not apply to committee meetings where planning and recommendations for business meetings are developed and less than a quorum exists. This meeting format will not apply to the meeting designated as the Annual Meeting, as addressed in the by-laws.

Reporting Requirements

There are no regular reporting requirements, except as authorized in the following:

The Wisconsin Supreme Court has held that such a meeting occurs whenever such a "convening of members" satisfies two requirements:

1. There must be a purpose to engage in governmental business, which is broadly construed to refer to any formal or informal action, including discussion, deliberation, decision, or information gathering, on any matter within the scope of the governmental body's authority.
2. The number of members involved must be sufficient to determine the governmental body's course of action.

Definitions

For the purpose of teleconference and videoconference meetings, the following definitions apply:
1. Meeting: Under the open meetings law, a "meeting" is defined as "the convening of members of a governmental body for the purpose of exercising the responsibilities, authority, power or duties delegated to or vested in the body." Sec. 19.82(2), Wis. Stats.

2. Reasonably Accessible: Base on the Opinion of Attorney General, at least one location can be designated as an accessible meeting place and identified as the "host site" for notification purposes. Case law and basis of opinion follows:

State ex rel. Newspapers ***v.*** Showers, 135 Wis. 2d 77, 102-03,398 N.W.2d 154 (1987).

The Wisconsin Attorney General has rendered an opinion, as to whether a meeting by teleconference or similar electronic means, constitutes a meeting under the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. In Opinions of the Attorney General, Vol. 69, p. , 1980, determines the applicability to satisfying the Open Meetings Law in: "**The test to be utilized is whether the meeting place is 'reasonably accessible,' and that is a factual question to be determined in each case.**"

Policy

A. Procedure

The procedure consists of a multi-step process, by following these steps the communications via the tele- and video-conferencing system will be very effective and promote participation. The steps to this process are as follows:

1. Establish and communicate a date and time for the meeting. For governmental business meetings, the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law requires that the meeting announcement shall be posted in an area of public access and viewing for a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
2. Participants at SSMG meetings shall minimally include a meeting leader, note taker and at least half of the organizations (active) SSMG members present.
3. Prepare for the meeting by issuing an agenda of topics to be included with the posting that are intended to be covered in the meeting.
4. Each meeting participant shall maintain proper etiquette (see Etiquette Guidelines below).
5. A format for discussion shall be followed. For governmental business meetings, the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law requires that the meeting notes (minutes) be posted in an area of public access and viewing immediately following the meeting.

B. Meeting Leader

During the first step, the "meeting leader" (typically the Chair) recognizes the need to utilize the tele- or video- conferencing format, e.g. with regular business meetings. The "meeting leader" is defined as the person that maintains and develops the agenda, and identifies a person(s) wishing to be a contributor(s) (or spokesperson of an item) in the meeting. Once the need for the format is identified, a master agenda shall be developed for the meeting and a list of "host and remote" sites identified. The "meeting leader" shall also inform all expected participants with the date, time, and brief explanation of content of the meeting.

C. Site Leader

All participants shall prepare for the meeting. A "site leader" will be appointed (typically, an SSMG member), this person's responsibilities shall include:
1. Operation of the site equipment
2. Acts as a representative of the remote site group
3. Answers general questions of the group at his/her particular site

All other participants are expected to be on time, and ready to participate in the meeting.

D. Meeting Sites

There are three types of meeting locations:

1. Host Site – There will be a single designated location for the meeting leader, and will be the site that is the "reasonably accessible" location to the general public. The public may attend at the Remote site(s) provided there is at least one active member of SSMG present.
2. Remote Site(s) – By establishing the video-conferencing format, there will be at least one remote site on the conference. To establish a remote site, at least one active member must be present at the remote site or the location and audience must be approved by the membership prior to its establishment if there will not be an active member present. Remote sites, not having member(s) present may be utilized for inclusion of political bodies/agencies in meetings.
3. Telephone Site – This site is similar in application as a Remote site, other than the lack of video capability. All other terms of use and etiquette apply to this type of site, including the use of the mute button when not actively participating in the SSMG meeting discussion.

E. Meeting Etiquette

During the meeting all participants shall exhibit proper etiquette. This is to assist the "meeting leader" in the smooth and timely execution of the meeting. Examples of proper etiquette are as follows:

1. Act as if the conference is a face-to-face meeting,
2. Make a request to speak of the "meeting leader" by addressing that person by name first and, then wait to be acknowledged to speak.
3. Make eye contact with the camera or video screen as if you were addressing another person.
4. Talk slowly and clearly, avoid monotone conversation.
5. Wait to ask a question until you are sure the others are done talking.
6. Respect others in the meeting by keeping questions and answers short, so everyone can be involved in the conversation.
7. Avoid side conversations, because this contributes to distractions.
8. Focus on the meeting; don't concentrate on other work etc.
9. Limit background noise, shuffling papers, tapping pens, and inappropriate gestures, etc. Where available, utilize the "Mute" button on the telephone handset.
10. Do not eat during the meeting.
11. Avoid excess body motion, because it is distracting and may cause a blurry picture.
12. Always assume the system is on, think before you speak.

F. Codes of Conduct

The following codes of conduct shall be exercised at meetings:

1. Meetings of the SSMG are held at facilities that are gracious in granting the use of their facility. All due respect and rules of conduct of the facility at a meeting site shall be followed. Any problem or accident occurring at one of these facilities shall be appropriately reported.
2. Unless approved unanimously by the Chair of the SSMG between meetings or by the majority of a quorum at a regular business meeting or special meeting called by the Chair, no meeting shall used to conduct sales or any service of a product. The Conflict of Interest Disclosure (Policy #101.05) will provide the governing rules for presentations by individuals or groups in attendance or by information that is provided to the membership at meetings.

3. The SSMG is an inclusionary, governmentally-chartered group. No conduct will be permitted at any meeting which would discriminate against any person because of race, religion, marital status, age, color, sex, handicap, national origin or ancestry, income level or source of income, arrest record or conviction record, less than honorable discharge, physical appearance, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or student status. Each party further agrees not to discriminate against any subcontractor or person who offers to subcontract on this contract because of race, religion, color, age, disability, sex, or national origin.