

News Release

Oakland County Board of Commissioners first board to meet remotely with complete video conferencing following Governor's new executive order

March 19, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – Last night, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners became the first government in Michigan to meet with complete video conferencing technology following a new executive order from Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Executive Order 2020-15 spells out the procedures required to meet remotely while still preserving the intent of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, which ensures transparency and public participation. Executive Order 2020-15 directs local governments on how to accomplish this while promoting social distancing and adhering to other orders and health and safety recommendations.

“In planning to meet remotely, we took extraordinary steps to maximize public participation, were able to conduct important county business and modeled and practiced social distancing – something we all need to do to address the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak). “Our experience can serve as a model for other local governments to ensure transparency and openness during this emergency.”

The Board allowed for in person public comment at the meeting and accepted comments submitted through an online public comment portal, which were read aloud during the meeting. Chairman Woodward was the only commissioner physically present in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium, while the other 20 commissioners were connected via video conferencing technology. The entire meeting was webcast live and recorded, which is consistent with normal board meeting practices. Although no members of the public chose to attend in person, the plan was to invite them to a prepared station at the podium with a video connection to all commissioners where they could share their comments.

The Board plans to use video conferencing to conduct county business while Governor Whitmer's emergency orders and County Executive David Coulter's county state of emergency declaration pertaining to the COVID-19 outbreak remain in effect.

"Numerous local governments have reached out for assistance to help bring virtual meetings to their respective meetings," Woodward said. "Oakland County is committed to helping our local governments in Michigan and across the state comply with the new order, and work together to get through this pandemic."

For more information about the coronavirus, please visit www.oakgov.com/covid. For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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