# Tips and Specifications for Hosting an Effective Zoom Meeting

Tips for Meeting Settings and Management

Zoom Meeting Settings

Zoom released a significant software update in early April 2020 that adds a new 'Security' tool to the meeting host's toolbar (see image). With some pre-planning and the proper settings, a Zoom Meeting can now be appropriately managed to allow public engagement when necessary while preventing unwanted disruptions. Prior to the virtual meeting, be sure the Security settings are set as follows:

- Disallow participants from sharing their screen
- Disallow participants from using the chat
- Disallow participants from renaming themselves
- Enable the waiting room feature so the host has the ability to allow individual participants into the meeting. While this may be tedious for a large meeting, it will prevent anyone from entering the meeting with an inappropriate user name and will prevent other inappropriate disruptions
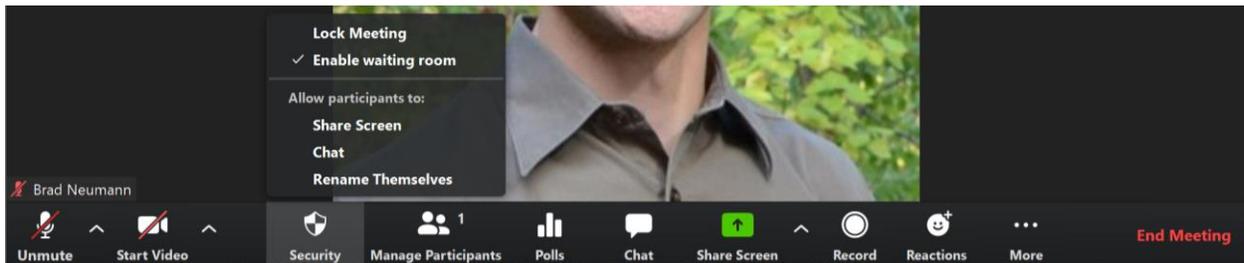
Also, in the Manage Participants tool, be sure to **mute participants on entry** and **disallow participants to unmute themselves** (see below):
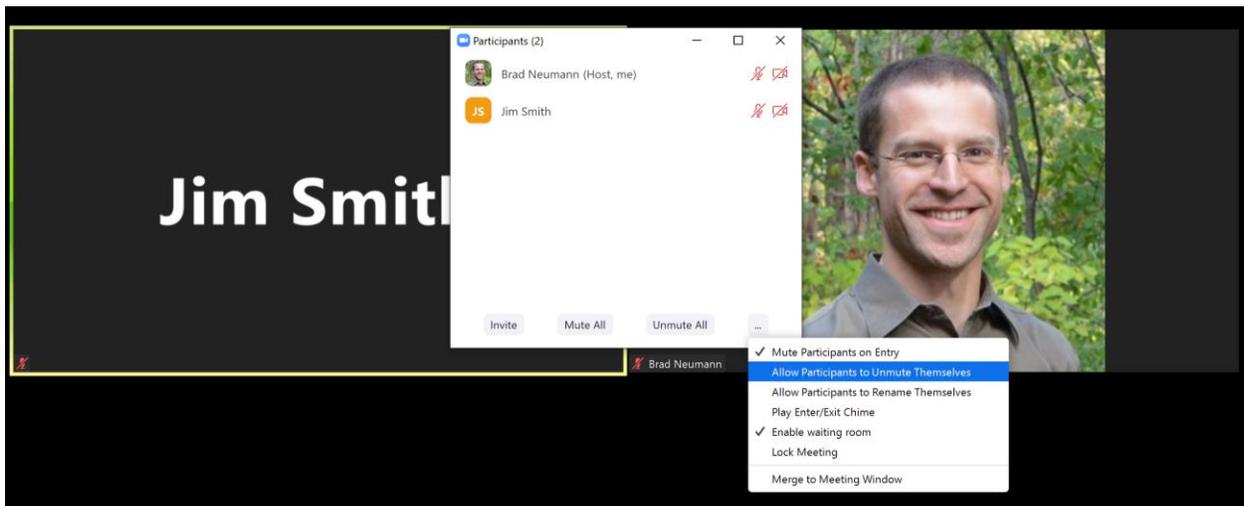
There is also the option to lock the meeting, but this feature should not be used for a virtual meeting by a public body subject to the Michigan Open Meetings Act and Executive Order 2020-15 and 2020-21.

Zoom Meeting Management

With the aforementioned settings, the meeting host will need to allow all local officials and members of the public into the meeting one by one (with the Enable waiting room setting turned on). Optionally, if the waiting room is disabled, the meeting host will want to pay attention to participant's names as they join and be ready to rename individual participants if usernames are inappropriate. To do this, right click over the participant's picture and select **Rename**.

For public comment at a virtual meeting of a public body, the chair or clerk would individually call on each meeting participant one by one and unmute that participant for public comment. If a participant's comment results in disruptive behavior (exceeding per-person time limit for comments; intentionally interfering with the conduct of the meeting), the Executive Order allows for a person to be excluded from the meeting "for a breach of the peace actually committed during the meeting." Before such removal, the public body should provide clear warning to the person that their behavior must cease or they will be removed from the meeting. The chair would then tell the meeting host to mute the participant if anything inappropriate is stated.

Some communities are using the Zoom Webinar format (rather than Zoom Meeting) when significant public participation is anticipated, such as comments from 25 or more people. In this case, it may become time prohibitive to call on each member of the public to ask if they have a comment, especially when there are comment periods at the beginning and end of a meeting. When using a webinar format, the clerk or chair can use other methods within Zoom, such as asking people to register to make a comment prior to the webinar or inviting those that are participating through video to enter their name in the chat if they want to be recognized by the chair.

Specifications for Adequate Technology

For the members of a public body convening the virtual meeting, it will be best for meeting interaction if as many board members as possible connect on a computer or mobile device so they can see each other with a camera and also see anything presented on the screen by the meeting host.

A Wi-Fi connection for a computer/tablet or a 4G LTE wireless data connection for a mobile device would normally be adequate to support a video connection. For those local officials connecting from a computer or mobile device, ideally each would have a camera and a microphone of some kind. It could be a laptop with a built-in camera and microphone, or a tablet or smartphone with a built-in camera and microphone, or the equipment could consist of a standalone webcam connected to a desktop computer and a headset or set of earbuds that have a built-in microphone.

If a camera and/or microphone is not available to a board member, but the member has a computer, he or she will need to call into the meeting in addition to the computer connection for viewing other board members and shared content. The call-in information will be specific to the Zoom Meeting URL and will be provided by the meeting host to board members and the public alike.

Optionally, a board member could simply call into the virtual meeting from a cell phone or landline – this is sufficient to satisfy the Executive Order on virtual meetings. With the security settings set as detailed above, the meeting host will need to manually unmute callers in addition to the individual unmuting their phone on the device itself (in the case of a smartphone).

For other instructional materials on hosting a virtual meeting, visit:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/government/Local-Government-Resources-for-Novel-Coronavirus-Response/online-programs