

Public Engagement Proposal for Hybrid In-person and Videoconference Participation at Public Meetings
October , 2020 -**DRAFT**

Background: In mid-March 2020 when NYS Governor Cuomo suspended public meetings through Executive Orders, the Ulysses Town Board began to meet remotely and to engage the public through videoconferencing with a phone-in option.

While holding Town Board, Planning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals meetings and other advisory board meetings remotely is not ideal, the videoconferencing feature has made it easier for some members of the community to participate in public hearings and discussions.

The Ulysses Town Board has expressed interest in maintaining a video conferencing capability to enable members of the community to participate easily in public meetings when in-person meetings are permitted to resume.

The following proposal was developed by our informal videoconferencing consultant Rene Carver in consultation with Town staff.

Proposal:

1. Purchase a 65" screen monitor/tv with audio output with a wall mount unit to be installed on the street-facing interior wall of the Court Room between the two windows (with slight overlap of the windows to accommodate the width of the screen) Estimated cost: \$ 750 + wall mount brackets for \$150 = \$900.00
2. Purchase a camera with a remote control to mount on top of the tv screen to capture in-person meetings held by the Court and Town. The camera would be able to capture most of the room where the court bench is located and it can be pre-set to focus on specific seats/locations elsewhere in the room as needed to hear reports from staff or the public. Estimated cost: \$800
3. Purchase a used laptop with sufficient ports to allow an HDMI cable to connect the laptop using Zoom or another videoconferencing program to the tv screen to project the community participants or remote arraignment participants. The laptop will use a wired connection to the internet currently located on the court bench to provide more reliable signal. Estimated laptop cost: \$ 250
4. Use a powerful existing microphone from the Court to capture audio from the room and project it out to the zoom audience through a cable connected to the clerk's videoconference laptop.
5. Purchase cables to connect the tv to the zoom laptop. Estimated cost: \$200
6. Use existing microphones for Town Board members and staff to amplify the sound of speakers in the room for members of the public and/or board and committee members with hearing limitations.
7. Use the existing battery powered microphone on the attorney's podium to allow presenters or members of the public to be sufficiently amplified for those in the room. (The room microphone will capture all natural and amplified sound in the room and project it out to the public through the laptop connection to the tv)
8. Use our computer technician and Highway staff to run the cables as discreetly as possible from the tv to the laptop. Estimated cost \$ 150 for IT and \$0 for Highway assistance.
9. Contract with Rene Carver for plan development, room design, equipment recommendations, oversight of installation and operation of the new system and training for all relevant staff. Estimated cost: \$1,200
10. Funds are available in 2020 budget in Town Hall CE and Equipment accounts, and Central Communications (IT)
11. Create a new seating plan for Town Board members, staff and the public to facilitate projecting the meetings out to the public while allowing presentations to be viewed on the tv screen by all. (See attached chart)

Grand Total of Expenses: \$ 2,150 for equipment and supplies
 \$ 150 for IT consultation to run cabling* already in 2020 budget
 \$ 1,200 for consulting services from Rene Carver

 \$ 3,500 -\$150 in 2020 budget for IT = new funding of **\$ 3,350**



STAFF

STAFF

Judge/Clerk/ Zoom Laptop

STAFF

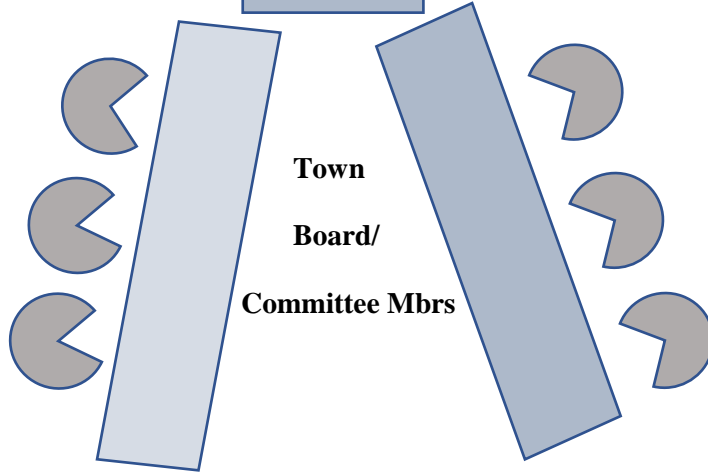
STAFF



Court Bench



Mtg Chair



Town

Board/

Committee Mbrs

EXIT

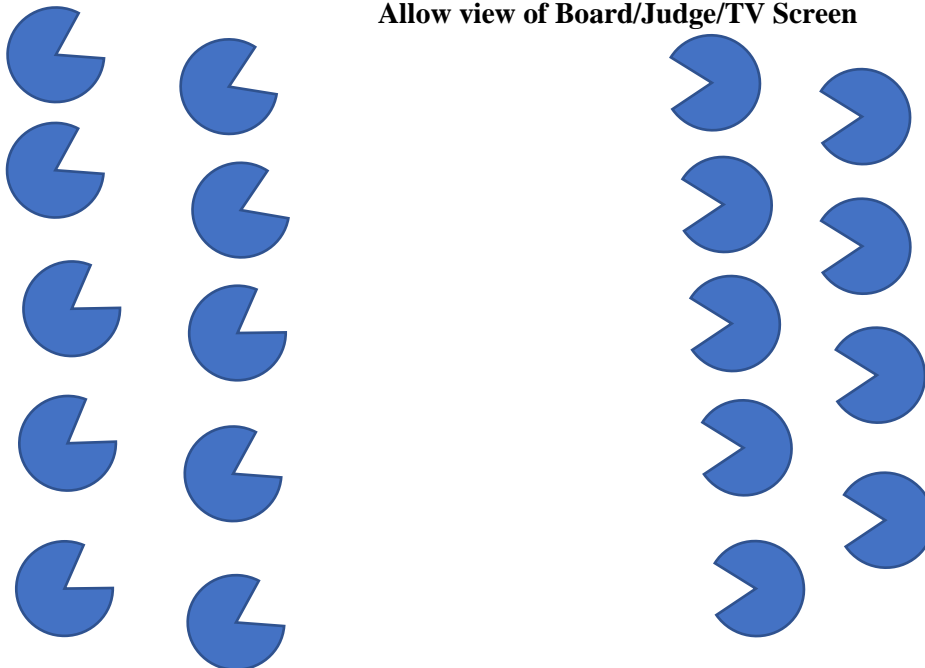


**Speaker
Podium**



**CHAIRS FOR IN-PERSON
AUDIENCE**

**To avoid obstructing camera and
Allow view of Board/Judge/TV Screen**



ENTRANCE



TV SCREEN/CAMERA (on Wall between windows facing Elm St)

