


FlashVote helps you make a difference in your community

Survey Results: Meeting Participation

 Survey Info - This survey was sent on behalf of the City of Stillwater to the FlashVote community for Stillwater, OK.

These FlashVote results are shared with local officials

794

Total Participants

740 of 1314 initially invited (56%)
54 others

Margin of error: ± 4%

Applied Filter:
Locals only

Participants for filter:
597

Response Time (ho...



Started:
Jan 20, 2021 11:44am CST

Ended:
Jan 22, 2021 11:47am CST

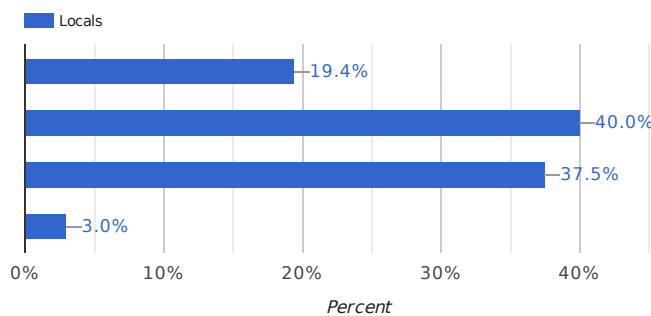
Target Participants:
All Stillwater

Q1 To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, starting March 18, 2020 the Oklahoma Legislature temporarily allowed local governments like the Stillwater City Council to hold virtual public meetings using videoconferencing (like Zoom) or teleconferencing (sound-only) platforms. On November 16, 2020, public meetings went back to in-person only participation.

Prior to reading this, what best describes what you knew about Stillwater City Council meetings?

(597 responses by locals)

Options	Locals (597)
I didn't really know they had changed to virtual meetings (or changed back to in-person only)	19.4% (116)
I knew they had changed to virtual meetings, but didn't know they changed back to in-person only	40.0% (239)
I knew they had changed to virtual meetings and then changed back to in-person only	37.5% (224)
Not Sure	3.0% (18)

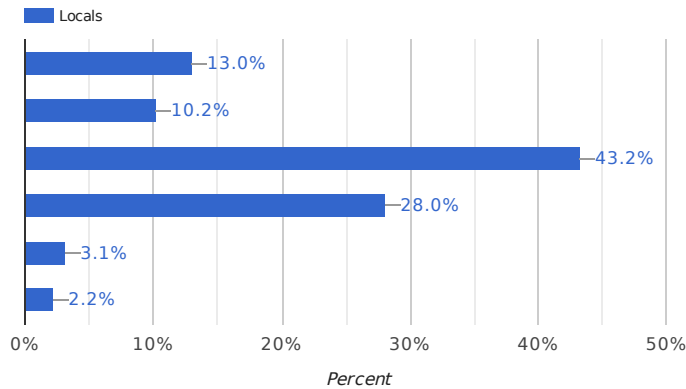


Q2 Going forward, which ONE of the following do you think makes the most sense for Stillwater's elected officials and other officials holding public meetings?

(586 responses by locals)

Options	Locals (586)
In-person only - Officials must attend public meetings in-person	13.0% (76)
In-person quorum - As long as a majority of officials are in-person, others may choose to participate using videoconferencing platforms	10.2% (60)

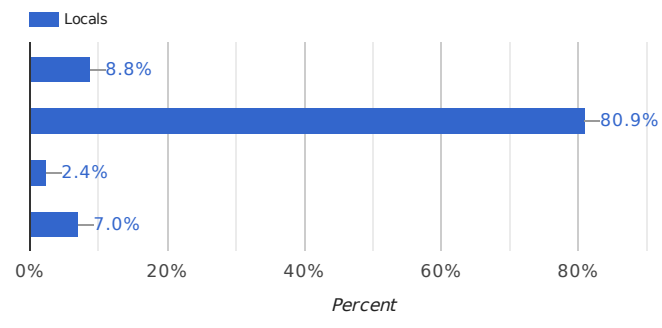
Options	Locals (586)
In-person optional - All officials can choose to attend public meetings in person or by using a videoconferencing platform	43.2% (253)
Virtual - Officials can hold virtual-only meetings using videoconferencing platforms, with no in-person option	28.0% (164)
Not Sure	3.1% (18)
Other:	2.2% (13)



participate covid officials
attend virtual option preferred
must person live think
mask meetings pandemic allow
Literally whatever works is acceptable
As long as there is a pandemic, the meetings should be virtual only.
In person quorum, but always live streamed, preferably with comments that can be entered "live".
virtual while the pandemic continues. in person or in person quorum afterward
Doesn't matter to me.
option 3 above; in-person option PROVIDING the city council declared necessity
I think it is ideal to allow both in-person and virtual, but this isn't allowed under open meetings
In person is best - but due to the pandemic virtual should still be an option
I am mostly ok w virtual only. Would like to know about citizen participation.
Did this question mean until COVID pandemic risk is high?
In-pefrson would be preferred, assuming all members have received their COVID-19 vaccines.
I think they should follow mandates of state statudes.
Each member should choose how they participate

Q3 Going forward, which ONE of the following do you think makes the most sense for Stillwater's citizens who wish to attend or participate in public meetings?
(582 responses by locals)

Options	Locals (582)
In-person only - Citizens must attend public meetings in-person to participate	8.8% (51)
In-person and virtual - Citizens should have the option to participate in public meetings in-person or by using videoconferencing or teleconferencing (sound-only) platforms	80.9% (471)
Not Sure	2.4% (14)
Other:	7.0% (41)



- Virtual only. There's no sense in gathering people in person when the same is able to be done virtu
- Virtual participation only
- Virtual only
- Virtual only
- Virtual for attendance, in person to participate
- Virtual
- Virtual only.
- Virtual only
- Virtual only, and the city should provide information and resources for in need via public library
- virtual only
- Given the current pandemic conditions, in-person meetings are dangerous and irresponsible.
- Virtual only and by videoconferencing if they participate.
- Virtual ONLY. Plus option to cut off citizen at the first mention of "tyranny". Irony intended.
- Virtual only, in person or via written comments to be read out in the meeting.
- Virtual only during pandemic
- videoconferencing only
- Virtual
- Virtual only
- virtual only until end of pandemic

Virtual only

When levels are as high as they are, there should not be an in-person option.

Virtual only

I can problems with the video and the tele conference as it become a free for all and out of contro

Virtual only

I am fine with Citizens participating virtually only during the pandemic.

All participation should be virtual only for the duration of the pandemic.

Same as officials, whatever that policy may be

Virtual only

Citizen participation would be determined based on the city council's risk assessment

Virtual only. We're still in a pandemic!

Virtual only. Come on use your brains.

Virtual only

Virtual attendance n Zoom is preferred at this time.

Virtual only

I think they should be required to follow state statutes.

Virtual or video conf

Virtual participation is the only safe option at present.

virtual only - covid is still here

Virtual only

Virtual only. Public officials shouldn't have to risk infection just to do their work.

Videoconferencing only.

Q4 Any other comments or suggestions about public meeting formats?

(145 responses by locals)



While I would like for community participation in virtual meetings, but I would like to have a way that those comments are moderated so that they do not stomp on each other.

If people are allowed in the meeting in-person, there should be a limit on the number of people to allow for safe social distancing.

I would discourage public input by recorded video and require attendance be live. For public meetings, the public venue should always be available with at least the chair present.

I'm a heavy user of remote conferencing and collaboration, in business, and have been for 20 years. However, I also meet IN PERSON with key clients in other states fairly frequently because, even still, crucial relationships and business must feature

the true physical presence. Given the importance of local City business and local impact, I believe there is a greater degree of necessity for direct physical presence than there would be in other industries or situations.

I appreciate being able to watch our city council meetings virtually and I feel like I have learned a lot about our city government by being able to watch the meetings online.

COVID safety must be a priority for our leaders and citizens alike. No one should feel they must risk health or life to participate in local politics.

My answers were predicated on COVID-19. Once risk is minimized I believe it would be of utmost importance to hold in person meetings.

no

The format depends on the public health concerns. Meetings should be virtual until the risk of disease transmission is very low.

Let's move forward and use virtual tools that are now available to us to make public meetings more accessible to the public.

In-person participants should be required to wear masks until the end of the pandemic. And virtual participation should be highly encouraged.

I personally prefer virtual participation, but understand that others do better in person. Until COVID is 100% gone, I think this option makes the most sense.

For the public health safety of all and to mitigate the enduring rising spread of COVID in Oklahoma as a whole, all meetings should continue to be virtual. There is no logical rationale for in-person meetings, whether in a pandemic (of which there is no end in sight) or not. If anything, governments should be focusing on reducing the digital/technological divide by ensuring equitable access to technology such as wi-fi rather than wasting money and resources and endangering public health by enforcing in-person meetings when they can be safely and effectively done remotely/virtually.

Everyone (including elected officials) need to do their part to curb COVID, which is even more rampant now than it was at any point last year. Doing so includes having any meeting that can be virtual, be virtual, and setting a clear example that the rest of the community should also be avoiding in-person gatherings.

Let's do everything we can to keep everyone safe.

The world has changed. People know want to use electronic means of communication. Others want to be in person. Don't silence the voices.

Coronavirus numbers are not getting any better at the current time. Slow the spread by allowing virtual options

Covid is still going on! We need to be as careful as possible and not let science deniers bully our civic leaders into unsafe situations.

We are still in a pandemic. Everything that can be virtual should be. Somethings can't be and some people and businesses need to be in-person to survive and that is understandable. But in my opinion, if it can be, it should be virtual and if not, every precaution should be taken to stay safe.

Stick to time limits!!

As the father of a deaf daughter it would be great if we could obtain a sign language interpreter or have better captioning technology.

I have mixed feelings about citizens being able to attend on line. While it would certainly be helpful, you can also have some crazy people join in who might otherwise not show up in person. As long as you can cut them off/disconnect them, it might be OK.

Syndicate live-stream to online communities

Not all citizens (seniors or other) may have ability to do virtual option, but virtual may be best for their health. Phone in option should be available. My neighbors are seniors without cell phones or computers. But, they have a landline. Due to heath concerns and driving at night issues, they rarely leave home.

The ability for the public to participate virtually is a great positive consequence. It is easier to hear the discussions of the city councilors and to hear comments of citizens and staff. Virtual meetings (with option for citizens to call in on phone) are consistent with COVID protocol from CDC and City of Stillwater.

I think that having an optional virtual forum will allow MORE people to participate in our local government, and I am for it in an ongoing way.

I think we should all be cautious. the time is not appropriate to do in person on anything. the option to video meeting online is a good one for public with an opportunity to voice an opinion either thru paper or phone would be good.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input in this manner.

let's stay virtual--lives are at stake!!

Public meetings are supposed to be just that -- open to the public. A virtual platform doesn't make that possible for some people.

During this very difficult time, appreciation is extended to the Mayor, City Councilors, and City Manager to do everything within their line of authority to take steps to reduce spreading this horrible virus, in all of its viral forms.

Thanks for asking this question. I appreciate that our city is looking out for both the citizens and our public employees and officials.

Thank you for serving during this crazy time. I appreciate your leadership

You cant have virtual meeting bc everyone will not wear a mask.

In-person meetings are dangerous and irresponsible during these current health conditions. They help to spread the virus do your part to minimize the hazard/spread.

As long as there is a pandemic all meetings should be virtual.

Please revert back to virtual meetings for the safety of everyone.

I fully support the use of virtual platforms for officials and non-official participants. However, I do think that should be reserved for meetings held during unusual circumstances, and the format of an individual meeting should be announced well in advance. IOW, normally meeting should be held in person, but when a pandemic or other extenuating circumstances exist, a virtual meeting is not only acceptable, but preferred.

Thank you for making governance accessible!

As long as people wear their masks, I see no reason not to meet in person.

Masks should be optional for the public meetings—especially since social distancing is being practiced.

When are you going to pick up my branches piled by the road from the ice storm? Asking for a friend.

I wanted to participate in a recent Planning Commission but did not feel safe going down to City Hall. I would have appreciated the opportunity to participate virtually and was a little frustrated that it was no longer an option.

For a meeting to truly be considered "public," it is imperative to consider the accessibility of the meeting format.

Virtual meetings increase the possibility of citizen participation.

Maybe they should use the same system as the schools where it is based on the county COVID numbers that week. If public schools are virtual, all government business should be too.

Meetings can be held safely in person by following guidelines. Take temperatures. Require masks that cover mouth and nose securely. Require hand washing, sanitizer and social distancing at all times.

During one of the meetings about masks, comments were sent in & read. I don't think they were "timed" like the in person comments were & it seemed like they weren't even required to state their name or address. Thanks for everything you all do to keep us safe & our city running!

I strongly advocate for virtual options in meetings especially given our infection and death rates here in Stillwater and in Oklahoma so long as there are virtual AND in-person options available for feedback from the citizens of Stillwater. Not all people have access to or are comfortable with virtual platforms, and providing them alternative ways in which to make their voices heard is essential. (Alternative ways include the dial-in option in Zoom if that can be easily monitored and moderated/access explained)

Stillwater's numbers are so high and with students coming back to campus, I am concerned for our hospital personnel. Don't let your guard down yet.

We may not be able to return to "normal" for a long time

Virtual only meetings are a close second for me. I would be just as happy and feel involved and included if meetings were fully virtual.

In person allows people to communicate at a higher level than virtual meetings.

If we require the Councilors to attend in person then citizens wanting to address the Council should do the same. Interaction is totally different when the meeting is wholly or partially virtual.

Not everyone has access to the proper technology to participate in public meetings however if you have all public meetings broadcast live over local television, live video conference, set up a monitor in the lobby of city hall instead of using the small meeting room and set up a hotline for comments it should decrease the chances of spreading COVID-19.

I am grateful for the City of Stillwater's representatives taking the threat of covid seriously in our community.

Can't in-person meetings be held following safety protocols as masks and social distancing?

I think the virtual option may need to stay because it has been proved to work. At some point, in person would be preferred but I am not sure when/if I will travel again for my job.

Thank you for your leadership during this challenging time.

If the State Health Dept. thinks it best to hold virtual only meetings then the city should do so.

Virtual attendance at City meetings increases access for all Stillwater citizens, just as broadcast (online as well as on TV) does. I think we could only benefit if city residents could contribute to meetings virtually as well. And in the short term, virtual meetings are the only safe option.

If someone wants to attend a meeting in person, they must wear a face covering and adhere to distancing rules. If they decline, they can attend using a virtual platform.

I serve on two volunteer boards, and I appreciated being able to meet virtually during the pandemic. I am reluctant to attend in person meetings until COVID 19 is better controlled. I am much more likely to attend and participate in City Council meetings virtually, rather than in person.

Despite what is most convenient, it is imperative that all our public meetings adhere to Open Meetings laws.

COVID dangers are real. Let's make decision about meeting based on science, for example, CDC guidelines. If/when it is OK to have in-person meetings, then if it is technologically feasible, people should participate in safe ways.

Seems like state government does not want to be dictated to by federal government, but then state government wants to have control and dictate to city government.

The city council should have the ability to declare the necessity (i.e., pandemic, other event which makes in-person meeting difficult) to allow videoconferencing meetings - for officials and public participation. The state shouldn't determine what works best for the city. As long as ample notice is provided to the public, video conference meeting should be allowed.

Thank you for this survey! to keep everyone safe, keep them virtual. But have the option so that people can make comments in person in case they don't have computers

End the mask ban. Let's stop the nonsense.

I believe the ability to join a meeting virtually lowers the barrier to citizen input. I also believe the City did a fantastic job with the hybrid system they implemented last year that allowed in-person and virtual engagement.

Utilize tech to limit spread of disease

The mask mandate must be enforced! COVID-19 is out of control

I don't understand why the meetings are no longer virtual, especially since the pandemic has been worse in the Stillwater area since November. I think that masks and social distancing must be put in place if citizens and city officials are going to attend in-person meetings. We owe it to our city officials to keep them safe during meetings. I believe most citizens should participate virtually if at all possible.

Zoom is way over rated! Not the same at all.

Some of us really liked attending when it was virtual because we could keep in touch with what was happening while doing dishes, or other things. I had never been to a meeting in person, and I'm an at risk group, so I won't be attending in person now either.

For safety, limited personal contact is the best practice.

Public participation is essential. Virtual meetings are too impersonal yet some of the public are reluctant to risk in person attendance. Citizen participation may increase with the virtual option.

Technology is not full proof and there will be issues for patrons to only address the meeting virtually. Following socially prescribed practices should continue for those who wish to attend in person.

All attendees must wear masks and be separated from others by 6 feet.

I think it might be safer for the time being if public participation was virtual only, not knowing what someone has been exposed to previously.

Do the best you can under the circumstances

explicitly advertise access options

If meetings are held virtually, there needs to be some option for people who do not have an adequate internet connection to also participate. Perhaps broadcasting the meeting on a big screen in a publicly accessible area with a handheld device that a moderator can pass around (and disinfect) if people want to provide input.

I think everyone who attends in person should be required to wear a mask and socially distance. Maybe there should be a registration for citizen in-person attendance to limit crowd size to allow for social distancing.

I have no problem with the virtual meeting formats and prefer it over the in person meetings right now. The buildings are not designed with physical distancing in mind so this is a great option.

I hope that the city council members if are in person to person meetings they will follow the mask mandate rules. I am also concerned about the lack of vaccines for Stillwater.

No in-person for Anyone until Covid cases drop out of Community Spread is the safest. A minimum of over 6 feet apart for anyone and ALL must wear masks. If the UK or South Africa variant show up in Payne County then everything should go back to virtual only. It is SO unwise that anyone needs to meet in person right now. Covid is really high right now!

I strongly support a resumption of virtual-only meetings for the duration of the pandemic, at least.

Make it KNOWN to the community that you are holding them so we can be sure to attend if we woodsy. Quit being secretive or holding them when most people can't come.

Staying safe and smart should be at the forefront on these meetings. Most don't need to be attended in person, in my opinion.

Councilmen are elected officials who choose to be so they should attend in person as they have been entrusted to do so. The city requires masks to be worn so if a person can't wear a mask they might feel as if they have been barred from city council meeting so attending virtually should be allowed. They should not be barred in the first place.

Allowing for virtual appearances or in-person optional allows officials and the public the opportunity to choose what is best for their personal health and well-being while still being able to participate.

Having options that allow for quick changes is a very practical idea. We can't wait on the legislature to meet in session and change rules that need quick response.

I think at least one council member (or the mayor?) should be required to be in person at every meeting so that people who come in person can see an actual person (and so that the risk of illness doesn't all fall on the shoulders of non-elected employees)

Keep letting the citizens have an equal voice.

Adding virtual as an option is a good idea, but I still think it's important to hold regular in person meetings.

This should be the norm regardless of covid!

400,000 Americans are dead. Show leadership by following all CDC guidelines. Do the right thing and normalize safety.

Great opportunity for people who live out of town, are not wanting to get out to participate

Enforce mask mandate with fines and/or jail terms.

Citizens should receive written guidance about board appearance. Have been blindsided in the past with "gotcha" experiences

The council should have never gone back to in person! No one should be in person, and bars, restaurants, and other businesses should not be open! Curbside only.

It's now 2021. There is no need to meet in person.

Our City Council have done an outstanding job.

I appreciate your attention to detail and keeping us safe . . . my answers tended to participation in person or virtual if more comfortable. I think with the vaccine roll out (haven't got mine yet) going ahead people will be wanting to get back to more normal asap. Thank you again ;-)

Our entire liberal mayor and council suck.

Keep working to reduce spread and do whatever makes your lives easier.

Allow people as many ways to participate in their government as possible.

We should be doing everything we can to limit the gathering of people until Covid-19 is under control. Everything can and should be virtual.

Masks are ineffective against viruses and should be optional, i.e. if a person feels as if they need one, they are allowed to wear one. Healthy people do not need to wear masks.

These policies should re-evaluated as we make progress in controlling the spread of coronavirus.

In-person attendance for everyone should be required. Looking face-to-face nets very different reactions than being in the "comfort" of your home. That said, I believe we should only return to in-person meetings once the COVID vaccine becomes widespread.

If in-person only if all precautions are used. Persons who do not wish to abide by these precautions will not be allowed in the meeting room. No exceptions.

End the mask mandate so all citizens are allowed to participate. No one should be discriminated against due to medical, religious, or freedom situations.

Work with our Legislators & Governor to extend remote meeting options indefinitely or at least until this pandemic is fully under control.

Virtual is best until the pandemic is under control.

Public meetings should always be available for viewing and input from the public. Hence 'public' meeting.

We need city officials to lobby the state capitol to extend open meetings act to the final days of a pandemic. It's a deadly pandemic and city officials shouldn't risk their lives like this. But, doing so without a state extension can invite crazy Riley Flacks of Stillwater to criticize further.

If the council meets in person, why can't our children go to school?

Once the pandemic has past officials should be required to attend meetings in person and any of the public who would like to comment must also be present

I appreciate the facts based leadership of our city council during this pandemic. Keep up the good work.

There are multiple other means (polls, surveys, etc.) to have input if one cannot attend in person.

The pandemic is only getting worse, with new more transmissible strains popping up - until the vaccine brings us to herd immunity levels, why risk in-person meetings when you don't have to?

I'm assuming this is for during the pandemic and will return to in person once covid is under control. In person contact is important for our government but there's a freaking pandemic, if people can be virtual then do so.

Do not spread COVID. Allow for virtual participation in public meetings.

Thanks for asking! Keep up the great work trying to make the best decisions for our community.

Meeting formats should be held in a way that complies with recommendations from CDC and what is best for majority of people.

With covid raging, meetings and all participants need to be zooming or using a similar process.

We should be ensuring that both officials feel safe and those who wish to participate feel safe. Virtual meetings make participation easier for the masses.

I think we should still be doing as much virtually as possible. I am in the camp that believes that the more we can do to curb the spread of COVID, the better off our community will be physically and mentally (health wise), fiscally and socially. Making personal adjustments to our daily lives and being malleable for the greater good is not too much to ask.

I appreciate our elected and appointed officials keeping the government going during the pandemic, and I respect and appreciate the risks that they continue too have to take. I felt that some of the letters and videos, were even more effective than simply appearing in person. (I certainly didn't concur with some of those letters or videos, but I did think that they were effective.) I feel that there's no substitute for appearing in person, where nonverbal cues can communicate just as much as someone's words. But sometimes, appearing in person is not safe or not reasonable. The option for public participation remotely is a needed consideration for those who are unable or at risk, pandemic or not.

It is helpful to working families and council members to allow video teleconference. Let's utilize technology to best fit our needs.

Masks should be required for in-person meetings! Use video when at all possible until COVID is under better control.

Once enough people are vaccinated, go back to in person. Need more in person town halls with masks and social distancing (at Community Center). Speakers need more than three minutes. Cameras further suppress public input. Councilors need to get out and interact with citizens in less formal settings just to gather input, but first we need to know what issues are being considered. We need more of this from the News Press if they wish to remain relevant.

Kick out anyone who thinks the virus is fake, there is no constitutional right to spread dangerous lies

Free and open meetings not dependent on glitchy software and expensive technology should be the goal of every level of American government.

Citizens first. This is official city business

I think each person should have the option to choose how they attend, but allow the virtual so even people who can't attend in person can still participate

Allowing a remote option should allow for involvement of more persons that ordinarily would not have the ability to get involved.

I feel like as long as meetings are still public, it doesn't matter how they take place. It would be nice if there were a live chat option. It would need a moderator to keep it clean and moving forward.

Infection numbers are too high for any in-person meetings, especially ones open to the public.

Virtual meetings make sense NOW, due to the large numbers of COVID cases!

I don't see any reason to do in person until the pandemic is under control and we have wide spread vaccinations.

I think officials should have the option, on a meeting to meeting basis, to hold in-person or virtual meetings. The meeting format could be declared on the agenda posting. Citizen attendance should always match the meeting type.

Virtual is fine when it is necessary, however not as much dialogue happens virtually, people can become distracted virtually and it is hard to get a read on all of the non verbal cues. In person connection and discussion is always better when making decisions.

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