



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

Date: 5/3/2022

Memorandum

To: Manhattan Community Board 4
From: Jesse Bodine, District Manager and Executive Committee
Re: Future of Committee and Full Board Operations

At its regularly scheduled meeting on March 28th, 2022, the Executive Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) the District Manager presented options for holding committee and full board meetings in preparation for when members are required to return to in-person meetings.¹ After a thorough discussion, the Executive Committee voted, with a vote of 14 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present not eligible, to temporarily hold in-person hybrid meetings in the Board's District Office, and providing the public and presenters the option to participate remotely. Further, MCB4 will strongly recommend that the public and presenters participate in meetings remotely and the board office will send a correspondence to board members to encourage each other to continue to wear masks.

Definitions:

In-person meetings: Committee members, presenters, and attendees all attend the meeting in person with no option to participate remotely.

Hybrid meeting: Board members attend in-person. Presenters and attendees have the option to attend in person or participate remotely. MCB4 members will only be able to participate remotely from their home or other private location when the NYS Open Meeting Law is amended.

Streamed meetings: Interested parties can view the meeting online live or at a later date. Streaming does not allow interested parties to participate live in the meeting.

Current Status of New York State Emergency Order and Open Meeting Law:

The Governor's Emergency Order (E.O.) that suspends the requirement of in-person meetings under the Open Meetings Law (OML) expires every 30 days on the 15th of the month. The E.O. is currently in effect until Friday, April 15th. In a statement regarding the most recent extension of the E.O. the Governor recommended that all organizations should begin meeting in-person as soon as possible. The current OML does not allow CB members to participate in the meeting remotely unless the location is posted and made

¹ District Manager Memo to MCB4 Executive Committee 3/28/22

accessible to the public. While there are multiple pieces of legislation proposing to amend the OML there is no confirmed timeline as to when the OML will be amended. The E.O. will most likely not be renewed after April 15th and MCB4 members will need to meet in-person and adhere to the current NYS Open Meeting Law.

Vaccination and Mask Requirements:

As reported by the New York City Law Department and the Manhattan Borough President's office Community Board may not require board members or members of the public to be vaccinated or masked.

Community Boards are allowed to institute public health guidelines that are consistent with the Center for Disease Control, Board of Health, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and NYS Department of Health.²

Budget, Space, and Operational Limitations of alternative plans

Below are some of the limitations to possible alternatives models:

- Meeting in-person without a hybrid option severely limits community participation and does not prepare the board for when/if the OML is amended.
- MCB4 currently does not have funds to hire a third-party vendor to run hybrid meetings for its eight committee meetings and Full Board meetings.
- Finding a singular space to hold all eight committees on a monthly basis is extremely difficult and is costly.
- Transporting the tech needed to run hybrid meetings to different locations creates several operational obstacles and puts the devices at risk for being damaged or misplaced.

The attached memorandum from the District Manager provides further details.

Executive Committee and District Manager Recommendation:

All Committees will meet in-person at district office and conduct hybrid meetings. The MCB4 office will promote and strongly recommend presenters and attendees to utilize the remote access to participate. By law, the public will have access to attend in-person with access being extremely limited so to meet all public health guidelines. Full Board meetings will be held in-person at large venues with a hybrid option. This proposal will meet Open Meeting Law while also allowing presenters, the public, and eventually MCB4 members to participate remotely.

MCB4 will begin conducting in-person committee meetings in June, 2022.

² 03/09/22 Memo from Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine enclosed