

Citizen's Petition FAQ

Improving Access to Oakham Town Government Meetings

This flyer explains the Citizen's Petition submitted for the June 24, 2025, Annual Town Meeting. It aims to increase transparency and community participation by requiring remote access and recording of public meetings.

- **Q: What does this Citizen's Petition propose?**

A: It proposes a bylaw requiring all public boards, committees, and commissions in Oakham to: 1) Offer live remote participation, and 2) Post recordings online within 5 days. 3) Posting agendas and minutes on the Town of Oakham website per the Mass Open Meeting law timeframes already in existence.

- **Q: Why is this being proposed?**

A: To improve transparency, accessibility, and public engagement—especially for residents who can't attend in person.

- **Q: Is this going to make things harder for volunteers?**

A: Not the goal. This is about support and tools, not burden. Help will be available for Zoom and recordings. Currently, the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health and until recently the Council on Aging use Zoom without any issue. Many of them post their own agendas and minutes. While the BOS administrative assistant uploads the videos to YouTube.

- **Q: Are there any exceptions?**

A: Yes. Emergencies, technical issues, and executive sessions are already exempt. An amendment is planned to allow for case-by-case flexibility via Select Board approval.

- **Q: Can the proposed bylaw language be changed at the Town Meeting? Or if this doesn't work as expected at a future Town Meeting?**

A: Yes. Like all articles, it can be amended by any registered voter on the floor of Town Meeting. Yes, a future town meeting can amend a bylaw. We have many bylaws today that are considered outdated and not enforced but should look to update them. Did you know that there is a bylaw that says you must have your house number on it?

- **Q: Will this cost the town more money?**

A: No, the town already has two Zoom access points. We have a Zoom account. We have a YouTube Channel and a town website. We can also apply for a specific grant that supports the expansion of our IT related support. Last year we received a grant of \$26,000 to revamp our Oakham website.

- **Q: What if a committee doesn't have internet or tech know-how?**

A: The expectation is a good-faith effort. Help will be available, and gradual improvement is the goal.

This citizen's petition was submitted by Aaron Langlois.

Any questions or comments, please reach out to me at aaronlanglois@me.com