Tips for Running Effective Virtual Meetings

General

- Test the software program before your meetings and become familiar with differences between programs: GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, Zoom, WebEx.
- Take 30 minutes before the meeting starts to practice video, audio, muting and unmuting, screen sharing, presenter sharing, chatting and questions.
- Use video, if possible, to keep people's attention.
- Have an agenda and script that include when presenters will need control and when to unmute attendees for questions and comments.
- Start meetings 30 minutes early to test audio, web cam and screen sharing, and solve attendee problems.

Starting your meeting

1. Ask users to mute from their end, if possible.
2. Explain the agenda and chat/question options to attendees.
3. Ask speakers to announce themselves before speaking. (You can ask this of members of public who decide to speak at public comment portion, just as you would in a regular meeting.)

One county's experience

Branch County is using Zoom to conduct its virtual meetings. We asked Administrator Bud Norman to give his perspective on it and suggestions to smaller counties who might not be familiar with such technology:

- Complete test runs to make participants comfortable.
- Do test runs with 2-3 people to make it manageable before conducting in larger group.
- Remind participants to mute unless speaking to eliminate background noise.
- Verbally identify yourself before speaking.
- Take a roll call vote for all motions/actions.
- Use phone(s) for citizens to call in or public comment.
- Don't attempt to achieve total proficiency before using, try it and work out the bugs as you move along.
- Know that you'll get better each time you use it.
- Do tests to ensure all can hear and it can be recorded by your clerk.
- Allow for a little extra time to conduct the meeting, you may or may not need.
- Accept that mistakes may happen with first time use but you can't correct those mistakes if you don't formally use it.