



Tribe♥

5 Tips for Running Virtual Strata Council Meetings.



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Introduction.

Our world has changed. Businesses and schools have transitioned online during the pandemic, and to a certain degree, this tech-forward living is here to stay – even for the strata world.

To [support the continued management and maintenance of your community](#), virtual Strata Council and Annual General Meetings (AGMs) have quickly become standard. If you're feeling a bit underprepared for this move to online, don't worry...we got you covered!

We've put together a few simple tips to help you and your fellow Council Members feel more comfortable and ace your next virtual Strata Council meeting.



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Tip: Don't forget to share this guide with your fellow Strata Council Members!

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1. Assess available tools.

The first step to any successful meeting is finding a platform that suits the needs of your community.

If your Strata Manager hasn't suggested one, or even if you've already tested one out, here are a few video conferencing tools you can choose from:

- [Zoom](#) – This is our go-to choice with our team at Tribe. It's one of the most popular platforms used by educational institutions and companies and does not require an account to join. The free version allows you to host up to 100 participants for 40 minutes of group calling, while the paid plan, allows for up to 1,000 participants without a time limit.
- [Google Meet](#) – a new video communications service that offers conferencing for up to 25 participants. The free plan accommodates unlimited minutes but requires users to join using an account. With a paid plan, hosts can have up to 250 participants and invite users with a link instead of requiring an account.
- [Skype](#) – a platform for meetings with up to 50 participants. It offers unlimited minutes and users can either join with an account or as a guest.






While these are all great options, they each have their own functions for you to explore! Try them out with a fellow Strata Council member or even with family and friends to see which fits your community the best.

If you're working with a Strata Manager, ask him/her to host a trial run with you or with your fellow Strata Council members.

This is common practice with our clients, taking some extra time with those who are not familiar/have not used this type of technology before goes a long way.

Pro-Tip



Don't get frustrated with people who are unfamiliar with this technology, remember that we have all been in those shoes. Instead, help them find their way around the microphone, camera, and other features. Remember, we're all in this together.



2. Share instructions.

Now that you have had the chance to familiarize yourself with the platform – it's time to catch your fellow Strata Council members up.

With the expectation that everyone should attend the Council meeting on their personal devices from the comfort of their own unit, it is important to help members navigate the technology on their own.

2.1. Here are a few best practices to prepare for your virtual Strata Council meeting:

- Ask participants to mute their mics if they're not talking. Don't be afraid to remind your Council Members of this as it can be hard to gauge when someone wants to speak. And with more people being at home while you are trying to run your meeting, background noise can get in the way and easily disrupt the conversation.
- Implement the "raise hand" function (if available) if someone wants to chime in. Some of our clients at Tribe have also shared that they prefer raising their own two hands on camera to show that they have something to share.
- Make use of the chat bar for any additional questions or comments. This can help speed up the discussion and notify the presenter if any thoughts arise from the section presented. It's also a great way to ask any questions before you forget them and address at a later moment without disrupting the flow of the meeting – keeping it efficient.



2.1. Here are a few best practices to prepare for your virtual Strata Council meeting: (Cont'd)

- Make it mandatory for everyone to turn on their cameras (trust us, this one makes a BIG difference). Since moving online, our team has loved being able to see each other's faces (no surprise here). It's helped us stay engaged, feel more comfortable, and work efficiently as a group. In fact, studies have shown that [55% of human communication is nonverbal](#), meaning that if our cameras are off – we're missing out on more than half of each other's messages.
- Also, dress appropriately...or at least remember you have your camera on. Make sure you're wearing pants because if you suddenly have to stand up on screen, you want to make sure you don't surprise anyone.

2.2. The more that you try this online format, the better you'll feel.

As we mentioned before, in our experience in Property Management, our Community Managers do trial runs with our Councils all the time and we go the extra mile to ensure everyone – even those who may be new to video conferencing – are on board and comfortable.

We have supported Councils who like to take charge of how they transition to online meetings, as well as Councils who prefer to sit back and relax as we spearhead the transition.



3. Circulate the agenda

Before going into your next Strata Council meeting, clearly communicate the points of discussion. Your Strata Manager should circulate the agenda and make sure everyone sticks to the points.

However, regardless if you're working with a Strata Management Company or you're self-managed, you should add the following considerations to your checklist:

What's your responsibility?

- What are your fellow Strata Council members' responsibilities?
- Share a copy of the agenda before the meeting so everyone has clearly defined roles.
- This will help maximize your Strata Council's time together and put you on the same page going in.

Ask your Council members if they have anything to add to the agenda and make changes accordingly. You don't want your virtual meeting to run overtime because of any unplanned important topics.

Know who will be leading each section and prioritize time for every order of business. This will help establish the flow of the conversation even if you're not all sitting in one room.

At Tribe, we value everyone's time. Our clients have appreciated our efforts in sticking to an agenda and maximizing our meetings.



4. Think of questions before the meeting.

You may have heard the saying “preparation is key”, and in this case....it certainly is.

Come up with your own goals for the meeting. Think about what you want to know, and what you think needs to be discussed as a Council. Let your Strata Manager know beforehand so he/she can prepare.

Write these thoughts down and be prepared to ASK. Your questions could provide insight and help fill in new areas or gaps. Remember, if virtual meetings become a norm, it's likely that you have not had the chance to brainstorm together prior to the call.

At Tribe, we want our communities to always stay informed and we do this in part by [using our bazinga! Community Platform](#) – a complete suite of software and services to support you as you manage your community, collaborate with your board or Strata Council and stay connected to your residents.



5. Be prepared to make a decision.

As with any in-person Strata Council meeting, you need to make decisions. You want to make sure you keep up the productivity and efficiency in all your calls while respecting everybody's time. This is our #1 goal in each one of our meetings.



Although going online can change the way we interact and collaborate, the objective is no different: coming together to make decisions that support our communities.

To achieve this, you may need to make several adjustments.

If you don't already have a Strata Manager 'chairing' the meeting (or even if you do), it is important to make sure everyone is on the same page regarding:

- How will voting taking place?
- Who will be in charge of taking meeting minutes?
- Where can meeting minutes be accessed?
- How will decisions be followed up on after the call?

By giving clarity to your Strata Council about what processes will be different (or what will be the same), you can ensure that the move online helps your Council achieve its goals.

Conclusion – We believe in you.

While this may be your first time holding a virtual Strata Council meeting, it might not be your last.

The most important thing is to be patient and prepare in advance. Ensure everyone is comfortable with the platform, knows the meeting procedures, and is ready to make the transition.

Finally, remember that the world of strata, not unlike the rest of the world, is made up of diverse personalities with unique communication styles, you can help [communicate with difficult people by staying level-headed and supportive](#).

Trust us...at Tribe, we LOVE integrating innovation and technology. Soon, this will become second nature for you too.



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[+Bonus Tips] Planning for your AGM/SGM.

To help you successfully plan and execute your Annual and Special General Meetings, we have put together a few ideas and additional tips:

- Inform your Strata Council that ALL Strata Corporations are eligible to conduct Annual and Special General Meetings virtually during a provincial state of emergency (as stated in the [Emergency Program Act](#)). These AGMs and SGMs are particularly new territory.
- Look into platforms that allow participants to attend by telephone or by proxy. Not everyone may have access to a laptop or computer, and it is important to make sure everyone can take part.
- Consider your voting procedures. With the chance that not everyone may have a camera or microphone, think about how you will record votes.
- Some votes may take place through a simple roll call at the time of meetings, but others – such as elections – may require secret ballots. Consider whether your existing platform has a feature for this or if another online tool is needed. Help participants by dedicating time to your meeting for them to cast their votes.
- Hold an info session to test out the platform prior to your official meeting. Walk everyone through the features and treat it as a practice. You don't want members running into issues on the day of your AGM/SGM.

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