

A woman with long, wavy, light brown hair is sitting on a green lawn, focused on a laptop. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. To her right, a young child with light brown hair is sitting on the grass, playing with a yellow and black toy. The background shows a blurred green lawn and trees under a bright sky. A dark, semi-transparent triangular overlay is in the top-left corner, containing the text.

HOSTING REMOTE PUBLIC MEETINGS

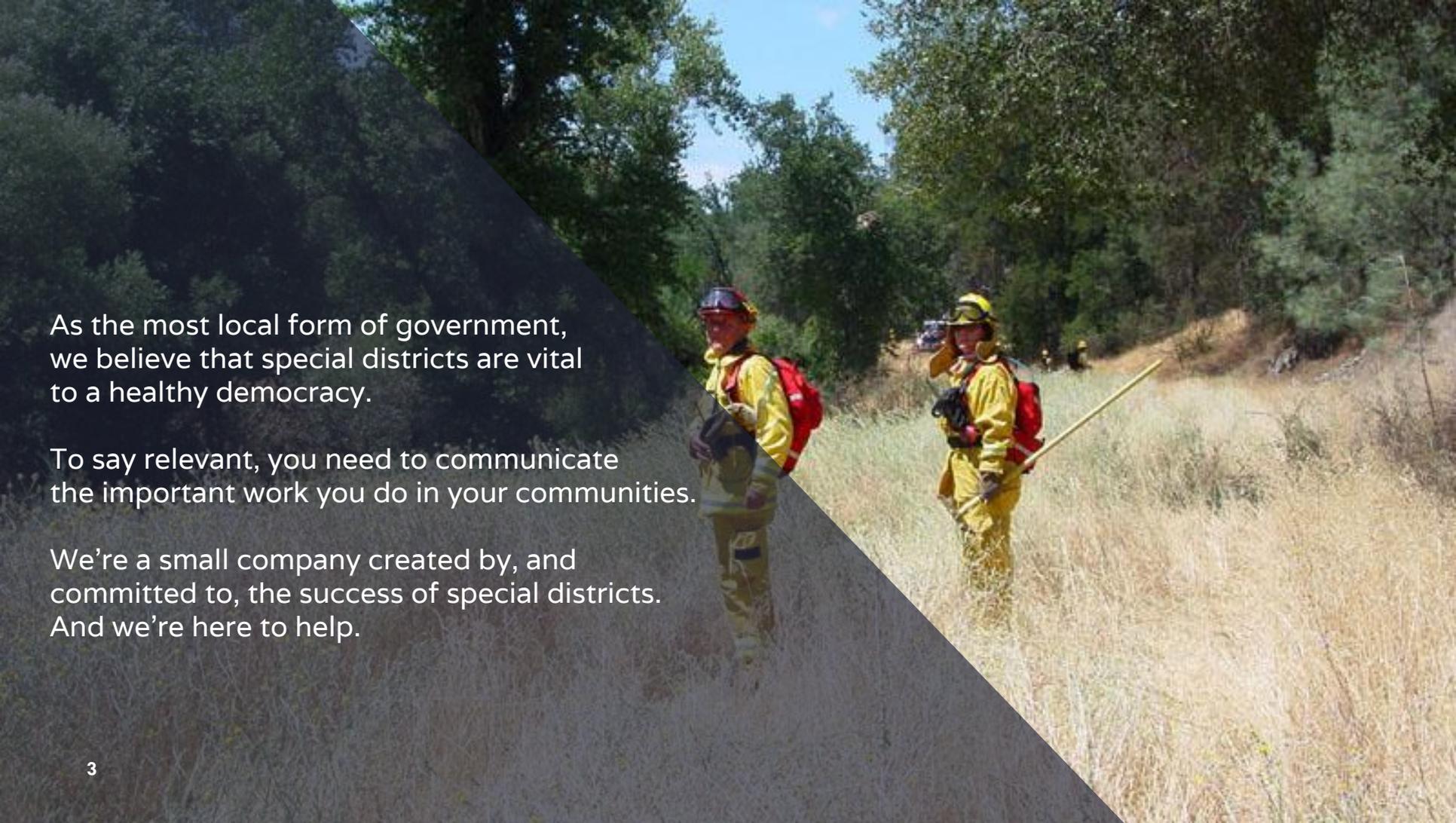
(During the new normal)

SLOANE DELL'ORTO,

retired fire captain

...and Streamline co-founder





As the most local form of government,
we believe that special districts are vital
to a healthy democracy.

To say relevant, you need to communicate
the important work you do in your communities.

We're a small company created by, and
committed to, the success of special districts.
And we're here to help.

THIS IS GONNA BE FUN! :))

Considerations

Cost, features vs. needs, ease of use, and how to choose the right platform for your needs.

How-to

Tips for running a great public meeting that will make your community proud!



A photograph of a silver laptop resting on a patch of green grass. A dark, semi-transparent diagonal shape covers the left side of the image, serving as a background for the text.

CONSIDERATIONS

Cost, features vs. needs, ease of use, etc.

RULE OF THUMB:

The more expensive, the more features and/or complicated to use.

- Introducing additional features adds complexity, but gives you greater control (ex: Zoom Meeting vs. Webinar, GoToMeeting vs. GoToWebinar)
- Cheap and free tools may not give you the level of control you need, may allow limited meeting time, or can be hard to use (ex: freeconferencecall.com)

DEVELOP YOUR LIST OF NEEDS

Start with budget

- Do you want the board and staff to be on video?
- Do you want multiple people to be able to share screens?
- Do you need to completely control public participation, including audio and video?
- Do you need to provide closed captioning?

OPTIONS: AUDIO ONLY

Old skool phone bridge or conference line

Pros: you may already have one, so no additional costs

Cons: it's much harder to manage participants (especially the public)

Cloud-based videoconference solutions, audio-only

Pros: many offer an audio only option, managing participants is done on a computer

Cons: additional expense to subscribe (most are monthly)

OPTIONS: VIDEO + SCREEN SHARE

Google Hangout / Meet

\$15 - 25 per month

What's cool about it:

If you already use G-Suite it's free! Also, auto captioning for people with disabilities.

What I don't love:

People show up with audio and video enabled automatically, and the auto-captions are pretty awful.. :))

OPTIONS: VIDEO + SCREEN SHARE

FreeConferenceCall.com

Free to \$15 per month (pay as you can model)

Multiple add-ons available (extra storage, transcriptions, etc)

What's cool about it:

Permanent number + access code, great documentation, transcriptions!

What I don't love:

You still have to punch in an access code when calling, and the technology is inferior (confusing*, service went out when testing), permanent number makes party crashing easier

OPTIONS: VIDEO + SCREEN SHARE

Uberconference

\$15 per month

What's cool about it:

Easy to use, permanent phone number (with no PIN required!), permanent URL, ability to mute everyone before they enter.

What I don't love:

People can unmute themselves easily, only audio is recorded (no video) and permanent phone number (with no PIN required!)*

OPTIONS: VIDEO + SCREEN SHARE

Zoom Meetings, GoToMeeting

~ \$15 per month (webinar add on is additional)

What's cool about it:

You can set up your meeting so everyone is muted and cameras are off by default, and you can add passwords to your meetings. You can also set a permanent call in number for attendees.*

What I don't love:

Attendees can unmute or turn on cameras at any time (although most tools now have options to Mute All or Stop Video).

OPTIONS: VIDEO + SCREEN SHARE

Zoom Webinar, GoToWebinar

\$55 / month (Zoom) or \$50 / month (GoTo)

What's cool about it:

You have complete control over how attendees participate - Q&A panels, unmuting controlled by host, recording, pausing, etc. Attendees cannot start their cameras, but Panelists can (you can add Panelists without charge.)

What I don't love:

Definitely the most technically challenging to learn - lots of panels to keep track of. Also, PIN is required for audio.

TAKEAWAY:

If you need complete control over participants,
choose a webinar solution.

If you want to save money and trust people to behave,
a basic meeting solution should work.

HOW TO

All the resources you need to run a successful meeting



ENSURE ACCESS

Make sure your meeting is accessible

Whatever solution you choose, make sure to have an audio-only option for anyone without broadband, or a computer, etc.

Keep ADA accessibility in mind.

If some people will be onsite, think through how you will accommodate remote attendees - this hybrid can be the most challenging!

For your staff and board, most options work on smartphones and tablets, as well.

ADVERTISE PROPERLY

Make sure people understand how to join

Add instructions for how the public can join your meeting (audio, video, or both) on the agenda itself, and anywhere else you typically advertise meetings.

Include: date and time of meeting, the fact that it's fully remote (if applicable), URL to join if you're using online tools, and the call in number and PIN.

Bonus: include tips on protocol and etiquette. People appreciate knowing how they are expected to participate!

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Really important if you haven't done videoconferences before

Best process we've seen so far:

- Start by having the host practice with one person who really knows how to do this (happy to help!)
- Next, do the same with staff who will be part of your meetings
- Lastly, get the entire board and appropriate staff onto a quick practice session to ensure everyone knows how to use tools (like mute!) and how they are expected to engage

WHAT TO PRACTICE

Everyone should get familiar with the following:

- Talking to each other, muting yourself
- Muting/unmuting other people
- Turning on and off video (if you plan to use it)
- Sharing your screen (if you plan to present)
- Test recording (if you plan to record - highly recommended for minutes!)
- Test Q&A and/or chat features - they will work differently

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Go above and beyond to ensure a flawless meeting

- Do the test on the same device you will use to host the meeting
- Designate a helper (who isn't you) for the day of the meeting
- Have one person dedicated to watching Q&A, another to Participants
- If you get audio feedback - mute your computer and call in

Bonus: Try disconnecting your WiFi to help you understand what the reconnection process is like

TAKEAWAY:

Get to know your platform of choice well - especially make sure you know how to quickly mute someone, turn off someone's video, and boot folks from the meeting if needed.

A photograph of a park path lined with large, mature trees. The path is paved and leads into the distance. A bench is visible on the right side of the path. The scene is bathed in soft, natural light, suggesting a peaceful outdoor setting.

THE GOOD NEWS

We've published a ton of free resources to help!

A few examples:

Comparison of popular remote meeting tools

*pricing is per organizer (logged in user, host, or admin - the people who will be scheduling, launching, and managing a meeting).
There is no cost for attendees (up to any noted service limits) on all platforms

	FreeConference Call.com	Uber conference	Google Meet	Join.me	Zoom Meetings	Zoom Webinar	GoToMeeting	GoToWebinar
Cost	Free to \$15 per month (pay what you can model)	\$15 per organizer per month*	\$15 - 25 per user per month*	\$20 per month per user account*	\$15 - \$19 per month per host*	Additional \$40 per month (in addition to Zoom Meetings)	\$12 - 16 per month per organizer	\$89 - 199 - 429 per host per month
Service limitations	Audio and video up to 1,000 participants 1GB storage standard	Up to 100 participants	150 or 250 participants per meeting (per price levels listed above)	Up to 250 participants	100 and 300 participants per call (at pricing levels above)	100 participants per webinar (unless paying for upgrade, see below)	150 and 250 participants (at pricing levels above)	100, 250 and 1000 participants (at pricing levels above)
Video option	Yes	Yes (option to turn off video before entering)	Yes (no option to turn off before entering)	Yes - 10 webcam streams per meeting	Yes, but host can set meeting to not start video by default for host and/or attendees	Optional, and only for host and panelists	Yes but not on by default	Optional, and only for host and panelists
Audio options	Can mute everyone by default, allow them to unmute, or selectively unmute - multiple join	Attendees can join audio only, or enter in listen-only mode Ability to "mute	Attendees are un-muted by default Organizers can mute any or all	Attendees have audio options (computer and call in) Organizers	Can set all attendees to be muted upon entry in advance Attendees	All attendees are muted by default, only organizer has ability to unmute individuals	Attendees are un-muted by default Organizers can mute attendees	All attendees are muted by default, only organizer has ability to unmute individuals

Cost has been lowered to compete with Zoom

Special District Remote Meeting Checklist from [Streamline](#)

We've designed this sheet to help you succeed when hosting remote meetings.

Checklist Item	Link to walkthrough guides			
				
<input type="checkbox"/> Review Tutorial	See how »	See how » View reference PDF »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Host a practice meeting ¹	See how »	See how »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Test talking to each other and test your video ²				
<input type="checkbox"/> Test muting/unmuting the other person ³	See how »	See how »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Test booting people from the meeting ⁴	See how »		See how »	
<input type="checkbox"/> Test sharing your screen ⁵	See how »	See how »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Test recording (if you plan to record) ⁶	See how »	See how »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Test chat features	See how »	See how »	See how »	See how »
<input type="checkbox"/> Test scheduling a closed session	See how »	We recommend setting up a different account (with different dial-in code) for closed sessions.	We recommend setting up a different account (with different dial-in number) for closed sessions.	See how »



Using Zoom Meeting to hold public meetings

These resources will help agencies using Zoom without the Webinar add-on. (Scroll down for Webinar resources.)

Recording of the webinar



Using Zoom Webinar to hold a public meeting

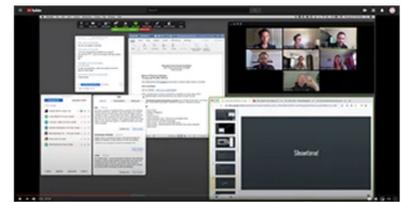
We've been teaching many districts how to set up Zoom Webinar for holding remote public meetings. We've gathered everything we know into one document to share with the community, and recorded a webinar of our mock public meeting using Zoom Webinar.



[Download the tutorial
\(PDF format\) >](#)



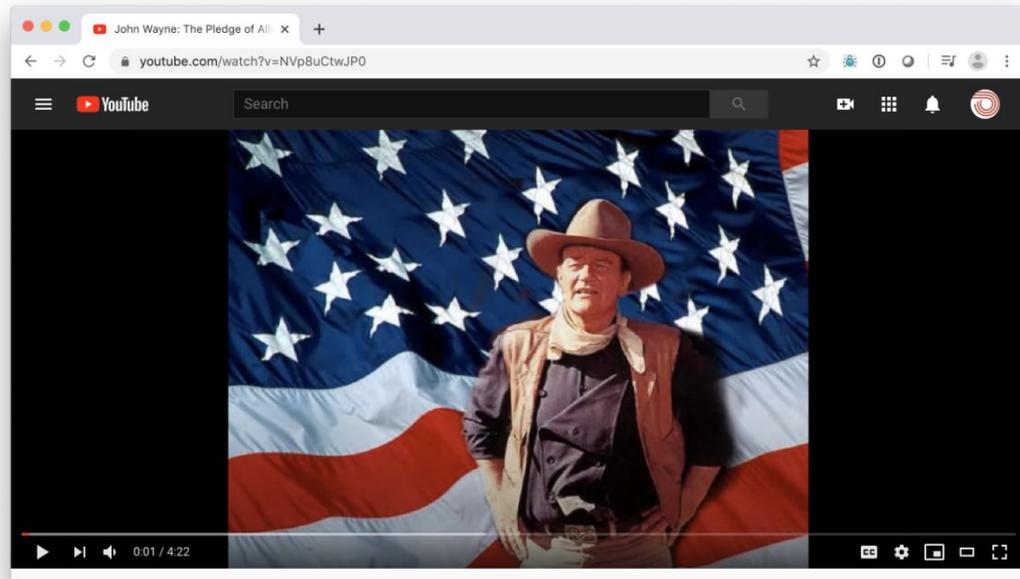
[Watch the webinar recording
on YouTube >](#)



[View the behind-the-scenes screen
recording on YouTube >](#)

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How do you recite the pledge of allegiance in a remote meeting?

on April 7, 2020 By | Sloane Dell'Orto | 0 Comments | Crisis communication

We've fielded some questions around how to handle the pledge of allegiance, if you are used to starting your meetings by reciting it but are now required to meet remotely. Having multiple people on speaker trying to recite the same thing aloud from different locations can be a bit disorganized.

A photograph of a park path lined with large, mature trees. The path is paved and leads into the distance. A bench is visible on the right side of the path. The scene is bathed in soft, natural light, suggesting a peaceful outdoor setting.

AND LOTS MORE

Including blog posts on just about all of this stuff

Streamline Blog

All things special district and technology related



Tech Tips (for the not-so-tech-savvy)

TOPICS

- Accessibility (4)*
- Best practices (14)*
- California compliance (11)*
- Crisis communication (8)*
- Federal compliance (2)*
- Online trends (2)*
- Social media (2)*
- Streamline Updates (2)*
- Website requirements (9)*
- Websites (3)*

RECENT POSTS

Tech Tips (for the not-so-tech-savvy)



A photograph of four children playing in a grassy field with many trees in the background. A ball is suspended in the air above them. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

QUESTIONS?

Educational resources: getstreamline.com/goremote

[Going Paperless webinar](#) June 2 (Tuesday!)

getstreamline.com/webinars

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