

Training about FreeConferenceCall.com

Kristen Anderson,
RosedahI Public Affairs
kristen@rosedahIpublicaffairs.com

Create a free account

Create a free account at FreeConferenceCall.com. You'll be able to see your account's information including Dial-in Number, Access Code, and Host PIN.

Posting notice / inviting participants to a call

Here is an example of posting notice:

"Due to the Peacetime Emergency declared by Governor Walz under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 12, the Health Pandemic that is COVID-19 as labeled by the Center for Disease Control, and the stay-home-order as declared by Minnesota Executive Orders 20-20 and 20-33, the following meeting shall be conducted entirely through teleconferencing or other electronic means. If the public wishes to participate in the meeting the public should submit comments by email or voicemail in advance, or provide comments during the conference call. At the time of the meeting, the public may use a telephone line to dial the toll-free number (844) 855-4444 and enter access code ___ followed by the pound (#). Participants can mute/unmute themselves using the mute button on their cell phone or by pressing *6."

Here is an example of inviting township officials:

"On Wednesday evening April 8 at 7:30, and on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 1 p.m. we all need to call this number to participate in the meeting: Our toll-free conference call line is (844) 855-4444. Then you must enter in the access code 123456 followed by the pound (#). During the call, you can press *6 to mute your line and any disruptive background noise, and *6 again when you wish to be heard."

Compliance with open meetings:

Is it safe to post the phone number, or can we just have people contact the clerk to find out the number? You need to post the dial-in number and access code in your public notice, to comply with the open meeting law. The number is safe to post, because it can only be used when the host, with their PIN number, has started a call.



To host an audio conference call from your PHONE:

To start a call as the host from a phone:

- Notify participants of the date and time of the conference call and provide the dial-in number and access code.
- Dial the dial-in number.
- When prompted, enter the access code, followed by pound (#).
- Press star (*) to enter the host PIN, followed by pound (#).
- Press star (*) **91** when you are ready to begin recording the meeting, if you would like.

To end a call as the host from a phone:

- Announce that the meeting is over and you are hanging up.
- Press ***91** to end recording the meeting, if you were recording.
- Hang up.

To join a call as a participant:

- Dial the dial-in number.
- When prompted, enter the access code, followed by pound (#).
- Participants can mute/unmute themselves by pressing ***6** or using the 'mute' button on their phone, if applicable.

Controlling who is heard / Muting:

The host's *5 command rotates between three options:

- *5 the first time:** Mutes everyone, but they are able to unmute themselves with ***6**.
- *5 again:** Mutes everyone except host. Participants cannot unmute themselves.
- *5 a third time:** Returns to an open conversation, everyone is unmuted.

Is it possible to 'mute all', then unmute just the supervisors?

If you are hosting from a phone, the individual caller needs to unmute themselves.

- The host would say, "I'm muting everyone," and press ***5**.
- Then supervisors would unmute themselves by pressing ***6**.

If you get a busy signal:

All phone networks have seen high amounts of calls being made, almost like a 'traffic jam'.

Our recommendations, if you or your participants experience issues dialing into calls:

1) Sometimes you just have to hang up and try again.

2) Or, text CALL ME to your dial-in number. You will receive a call back from the freeconferencecall.com phone network. Then you answer the call and enter your access code.

Online Account Settings and Recordings:**To log in to Freeconferencecall.com:**

Use the email username and password that we have sent you. Anyone from your township board can use this same information to log in.

Does my dial-in number, access code, or PIN ever change?

No, you will use the same numbers each time you want to have a conference call.

Who is the host?

One officer is the host of the call, whether it is the clerk or chair or another person. Only one person can be the host during the call.

Can it record meetings automatically?

Yes, if you change a setting. In "Settings" <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/profile/settings>, go down and click the box to view a drop-down menu, and click "Auto". This is what it looks like.

Meeting Settings

Entry and exit tones ?	On
Announce caller count ?	Hosts only
Display Attendee List ?	All
Wait for host ?	Off
Continue without host ?	On
Recording ?	On <small>Select "Auto" here and all calls will be automatically recorded once the host and first participant are on the call.</small>

Cancel Save Changes

Then be sure to click the blue button "Save Changes"!

How do I find and share the recordings?

The recording will be online at <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/profile/history>, or you can click at the top of the page "Menu" button and select "History & Recordings", where you can listen to it or download it.

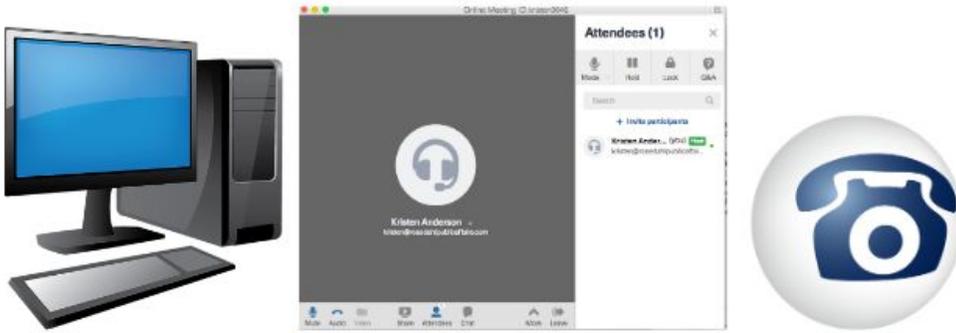
- You will see the recordings in a list, with the date and time and length of each recording
- Scroll over to the right and click the symbols for these options:

- Click to listen to the recording 

-Click to get an online link to share the recording 

- Click to download and audio file of the recording 

To listen to the recording via phone, call (978) 990-5099. When prompted, enter your access code, followed by pound (#). Press pound (#) again and the most recent recording will play.



To host an audio conference call from a **COMPUTER**:

To download the software to facilitate a call from your computer:

Go to <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/downloads>

Click the blue button “GET DESKTOP APP” to download and install.

Find the download called “FCC_installer.zip”. It will be on your internet browser, or in your computer’s Downloads file. Double click the .zip folder and wait a moment.

Double click the blue icon “FCC_installer...” to install. If there is a pop-up, click “Open” or “Allow”.

This is the software program, the desktop application to help with your video calls.

“FreeConferenceCall” is now installed on your computer.

To start a call as the host from a computer:

-Notify participants of the date and time of the conference call and provide the dial-in number and access code.

-Launch the FreeConferenceCall desktop application from your desktop.

- Click “Host” and log in with your email address and password.

- Click “Computer Audio” or follow the on-screen instructions to dial-in with your telephone to host the meeting.

To record the audio while hosting a meeting from your computer:

On the desktop app, there is a “Record” button on the bottom center during the call. Click once to begin recording, and click again to end recording.

- Helpful hint: sometimes this “Record” button is hidden if you have clicked the “Attendees” button and the list of attendees is up. Click “Attendees” or X out of the Attendees list to see the “Record” button.

Muting / For the host to control who is heard in the conference from a computer:

Open the desktop app FreeConferenceCall. Click Host a Meeting.

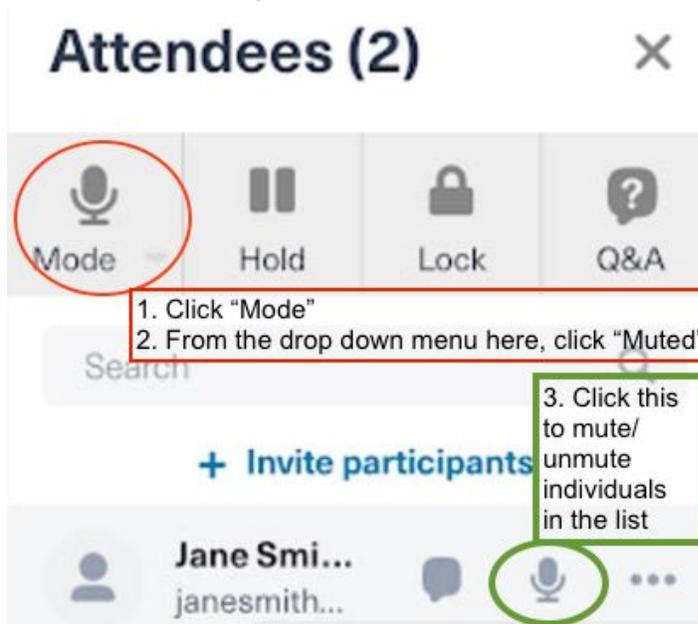
At the bottom of the app during a call, click “Attendees”.



On the right hand sidebar, there is a microphone icon. Click to see a drop-down menu.

- “Mute” will mute everyone, and they can unmute themselves with *6. “Unmute” returns to open conversation.
- “Lecture” will mute everyone and only the host can speak, and the host needs to unmute other callers such as the board members.

To mute/unmute individual people, you can click the microphone symbol next to each caller in the list, on the far right next to their phone number.



Billing:

Toll-free numbers Pay-as-You-Go billing:

Minnesota Association of Townships will bill you for the cost of your toll-free calls. It is pay-as-you-go for \$0.02 /per person/ per minute. For example: a one-hour call with 8 participants will cost about \$10.00. You may receive an email invoice, but you can disregard it. I am using the Rosedah Public Affairs billing information. We will keep track of your monthly usage and then Minnesota Association of Townships will send you an invoice for the monthly total.

Can I use my township's own billing information?

Yes, from your online account go to <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/profile/payment-info> or at the top click the "MENU" button and then "Payment Info". Enter your preferred payment information.

Resources:

More information is included in this guide about conference calls, posting notice, legal procedures, helpful hints, and more.

<https://mntownships.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ES3000-Township-Options-for-Meeting-Remotely.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions about Operating the Township

More FAQs are in this article posted 4/3/20:

<https://mntownships.org/news/mat-answers-questions-hosting-conference-calls-with-townships/>

More Support and Tutorials about the Conference Call Software

There are many helpful instructions and tutorials online at

<https://www.freeconferencecall.com/support>.

PROCEDURES (FOR REFERENCE) As included in MN Townships Library [ES-3000](#)

1. Town board chairperson decides it is imprudent or unsafe to hold an in-person meeting because of health pandemic or emergency declaration. These circumstances have been met by the Governor's Declaration of Peacetime Emergency, and separately by the Centers for Disease Control labelling COVID-19 a health pandemic.
2. Chairperson or other person contacts other supervisors to arrange for the date and time of the teleconference. It does not violate the Open Meeting Law to schedule the meeting.
3. A town officer acquires a teleconferencing number and entrance code from a teleconferencing services provider. The services listed in this document may be used, but other reputable providers can be found.
4. Post notice of the meeting: the notice must include the date, time, and telephone number and entrance code (if any), for the meeting. If this is a special board meeting, the notice must also list the items the board will consider. Anyone may post notice of the meeting. It is acceptable for a person to leave his or her home to post notice of the meeting under the stay at home order.
5. Optional Publishing or Posting: The board may publish or post extra notices of the meeting at their discretion.
6. Public Packet: If possible, the information that the board members will have during the meeting should be made available to the public, called the "Public Packet." The Public Packet could be posted for download on a website or shared cloud storage. Townships unable or aware of how to use those methods will need to decide on some other way to provide the Public Packet to those who request it.
7. Start the Meeting: At the appointed time, the board members join the conference.
8. Ensure each supervisor present can be heard. A call-and-response or roll call for each supervisor should be used.
9. Call for Quiet / Mute: The chairperson should remind the public that they are allowed to hear the meeting, but are expected to remain quiet during the board's business. If the township intends to allow public comment, it should explain when public comment will be allowed and how it will be administered during the teleconference. If possible, a town officer should make use of the online call management features available on most teleconferencing applications. Such features allow the officer to mute or unmute those on the call who are disruptive, whether intentionally or inadvertently.
10. Pass the Recognition of Telephone Meeting: The town board should pass a resolution recognizing their use of the teleconference power in the Open Meeting Law. MAT has provided a sample Resolution, found here: <https://mntownships.org/download/5517/> . This resolution may be passed during the teleconference.
11. All votes by Roll Call: All votes must be conducted and recorded by roll call, so each supervisor's vote can be indicated individually.
12. Optional Audio Recording: Some teleconferencing applications include optional audio recording of the call. Township boards may choose to audio record the meeting. Townships do not need permission from any individual to record the call. If the call is recorded, it must be kept pursuant to the data retention schedule.