Gmail **Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>**

Request for Virtual Participation Options at Future Town Discussions

3 messages

Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com> Wed, May 27, 2026 at 4:57 PM
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: Arthur Capello - Berwick Town Manager <townmanager@berwickmaine.gov>

Dear Mr. Capello,

I hope you are doing well.

I recently reached out to the Berwick Public Library regarding the May 14th budget discussion and was informed afterward that the event had been recorded and would be posted online. While I appreciate that the discussion was documented, my original question had been whether there would be a live virtual participation option, such as a livestream or Zoom access, so residents unable to attend in person could still participate in real time.

I wanted to respectfully raise this concern because accessible virtual participation can make a significant difference for community members who face transportation, disability, financial, work-schedule, or other barriers that may prevent in-person attendance. For many residents, the ability to ask questions or engage live is an important part of meaningful civic participation.

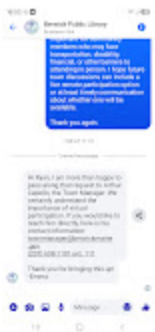
I understand there are logistical considerations involved, but I hope the Town may consider implementing livestream or remote participation options for future public discussions and community forums whenever possible. Even clear communication ahead of time regarding whether virtual access will be available would be extremely helpful.

Thank you for your time, your service to the community, and your willingness to consider this feedback. I appreciate the work being done to keep residents informed and engaged.

Respectfully,

Ryan Michaels
Berwick Resident

2 attachments



1000040771.jpg
580K



1000040769.jpg
1100K

Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com> Mon, Jun 8, 2026 at 8:00 AM
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: Arthur Capello - Berwick Town Manager <townmanager@berwickmaine.gov>

Second Request Regarding Public Access and Virtual Participation

Dear Mr. Capello,

On May 27, 2025, I emailed you regarding concerns about public access to the Town's May budget discussion and the absence of a live virtual participation option for residents who could not attend in person.

As of today, I have not received a response.

My original concern was not whether the event would be recorded and posted afterward. My concern was whether residents would have an opportunity to participate in real time through a livestream, Zoom connection, or similar virtual access. For residents facing transportation, disability, financial, employment, or other barriers, that distinction matters. Watching a recording after the fact is not the same as having the opportunity to engage in the discussion while it is taking place.

The Berwick Public Library acknowledged the importance of virtual participation and directed me to contact you directly regarding this matter. I did so on May 27 and am following up because this is a legitimate public-access concern that affects community participation and government transparency.

Accordingly, I am requesting clarification on the following:

1. Does the Town have a policy regarding virtual access to public informational meetings and community discussions?
2. Was a livestream or remote participation option considered for the May budget discussion?
3. If not, what factors led to that decision?
4. Does the Town intend to implement or explore virtual participation options for future public forums?

These are straightforward questions concerning public engagement and accessibility. Residents who cannot attend in person should not be excluded from meaningful participation in discussions that affect their community.

I would appreciate a response addressing these questions.

Respectfully,

Ryan Michaels
Berwick Resident

[Quoted text hidden]

Matt Tarasevich <mtarasevich@bernsteinshur.com> Fri, Jun 12, 2026 at 12:27 PM
To: Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Cc: Matt Tarasevich <mtarasevich@bernsteinshur.com>, Rae Iafolla <RIafolla@bernsteinshur.com>

Dear Mr. Michaels,

I hope all is well. As you know, this office represents the Town of Berwick. The Town has requested that we respond to your recent inquiry regarding virtual participation options. The Town's response to your questions are as follows:

1. Does the Town have a policy regarding virtual access to public informational meetings and community discussions? **The Town has no such policy.**

2. Was a livestream or remote participation option considered for the May budget discussion? **No, it was not.**

3. If not, what factors led to that decision? **It was not a topic of consideration, as the Town does not have the ability to live stream outside of the municipal building.**

4. Does the Town intend to implement or explore virtual participation options for future public forums? **The Town is open to exploring that, subject of course to budget and technological considerations.**

I hope this is helpful,

Best,

Matt Tarasevich

Matt Tarasevich
Shareholder Attorney
Please cc my assistant on all emails: riafolla@bernsteinshur.com
207-228-7158 direct
207 774-1200 main
207 774-1127 fax
My Bio | LinkedIn

BERNSTEINSHUR
100 Middle Street PO Box 9729 Portland, ME 04104-5029 | Manchester, NH | Augusta, ME | bernsteinshur.com

Confidentiality notice: This message is intended only for the person to whom addressed in the text above and may contain privileged or confidential information. If you are not that person, any use of this message is prohibited. We request that you notify us by reply to this message, and then delete all copies of this message including any contained in your reply. Thank you.
[Quoted text hidden]