

Alexandria Scottish Rite Valley  
Standard Operating Procedures  
for  
Hybrid In-Person/Virtual Meetings

## **Introduction: Standardizing Procedures to Achieve Consistent Results**

Alexandria Valley has significantly evolved its meeting procedures and protocols over the years since its four bodies were inaugurated and Officers installed under Letters Temporary in 1910. Over that time, changes in the location of its meetings, growth in the numbers of members, and the desire to realize the benefits of new enhancing technologies have demanded numerous adjustments to achieve and maintain the high standards of our gatherings.

The most recent significant event to impinge on our meeting procedures was the global Covid-19 pandemic. This situation initially caused an unprecedented cessation of all meeting activities. The subsequent introduction of internet-based technologies allowed us to introduce virtual meetings with participants at multiple remote locations using their personal computers or smart phones to communicate through the use of enterprise-wide video conferencing software. The use of these technologies allowed our resumption of meetings while still complying with pandemic-based “stay-at-home” mandates.

We quickly realized that this new capability for remote participation in our meetings brought significant additional benefits. This new paradigm enabled many members who had previously been unable to attend meetings due to their distant residency, health limitations or schedule impediments, to resume participation in our meetings and to enjoy the many educational and fraternal benefits of being, once again, a part of the Valley organization that they had previously enjoyed so much.

After we were able to resume our in-person Valley gatherings, it was apparent that we should retain our remote member participants by continuing to provide the internet-based video conferencing in conjunction with our monthly Valley meetings. Initial attempts to combine the live and virtual components introduced a number of audio and video challenges, which, though minor, tended to interrupt or distract from the meeting. An ad-hoc group of Valley members, under the guidance of our Executive Council, investigated the issues encountered, categorized their findings and developed remedial actions and processes for each identified issue.

This document describes those findings and the prescribed standardized activities, which when implemented, should allow us to minimize such distractions during future hybrid in-person/virtual meetings and thereby realize a consistent level of performance. Additionally, several areas of potential system enhancement have been identified for future consideration, and if eventually implemented, will be added to this document as a subsequent revision. The following sections prescribe procedures to address technical and performance issues in the areas of: Audio and Video Resources; Broadcast Production; Internet Conferencing Management. This procedural document will be implemented with the appropriate training as necessary to qualify members to implement the procedures.

### **I. Lodge Room Audio and Video Resources**

Figure 1, below, illustrates the audio/video component interfaces enabling meeting communications between the local, Lodge room participants and the remote, internet-based participants. Lodge Room activities must be sound amplified and captured on camera to be transmitted to the remote participants. For this, a variety of audio/video resources must be prepared and made available to Lodge room speakers including Officers, program and reporting speakers, and members wishing to speak from the floor.

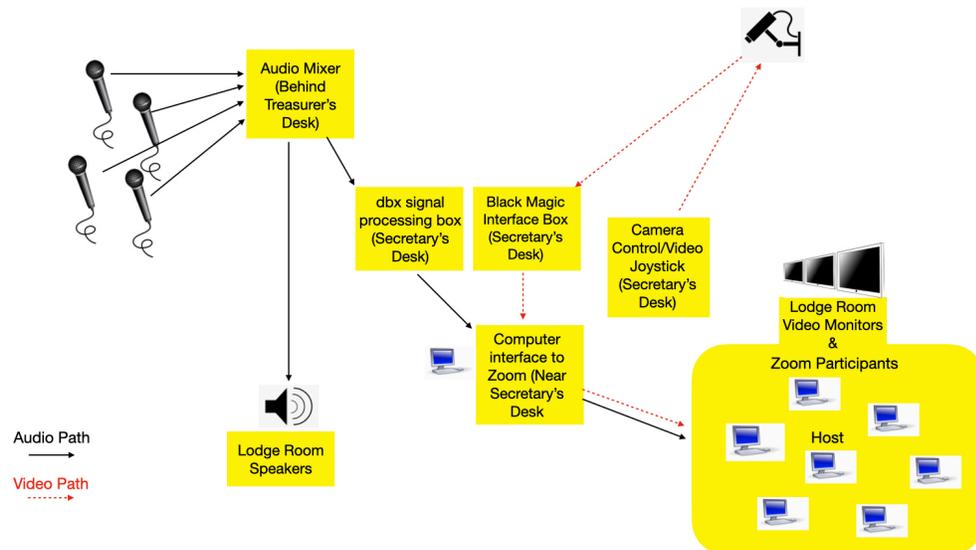


Figure 1. Audio/Video Conference Architecture

- A. **Wired Microphones.** Typically, four wired microphones are provided for use by the Presiding Officer, Second Officer, Secretary, and Treasurer at their stations. If required, the mic in the East may be passed to the Prelate or to the speaker at the lectern in the East. The Treasurer's mic may be passed to the speaker at the floor level lectern in the NE. All lodge room audio inputs are connected to the Audio Mixer located in the room immediately behind the Treasurer's desk.

**Required Procedures.**

1. Setup and Check: All wired mics should be checked prior to meeting for proper operation and volume. All settings are preset at the Audio Mixer - check to confirm that they have not been manipulated by untrained members.
2. Distribution: Determine all mic location requirements prior to the meeting to ensure appropriate equipment/lecterns are in place.

- B. **Wireless Microphones.** Additional amplification for use by members speaking from the sidelines, or by the Prelate from the altar or his place in the East, or by program presenters who wish to speak from a lectern placed in the NE may be enabled through the use of handheld, lavalier or headset wireless mics.

**Required Procedures.**

1. VM - Inform technical support personnel of those who will require wireless mics.
2. Tech - Equip those identified as users with the appropriate mic.
3. Tech - Perform sound level checks to ensure proper settings.
4. Tech - Collect and store mics following meeting.

**C. Lodge Room Camera.** A ceiling mounted, remotely controlled camera is installed between the altar and the West. The camera can be rotated through a 270° field of view with a +/- 45° void from a line drawn from the camera to the North side of the Lodge room. The Camera pointing, elevation and zoom is controlled with the PTZ Optics PT-JOY-G3 joystick by the Broadcast Production Engineer near the Secretary's desk, as discussed in the next section.

***Required Procedures.***

1. Zoom Setup for Camera Computer (IP Address: 192.168.1.29)

- **Camera #1** (Ensure camera selected is #1)
- Presets on the PT-JOY-G3 joystick control box: (Push: Button Recall, Number, Enter)
  - Recall #1, enter – East
  - Recall #2, enter – West
  - Recall #3, enter – Speaker
  - Recall #4, enter - Secretary
  - Recall #5, enter – Treasurer

**II. Broadcast Production.** Audio/video originating from the Lodge room is passed through a central computer interface to be transmitted into Lodge Room speakers and video monitors for local users, and to the Internet Conference System for virtual users. The computer is stored in the vault in the Secretary's office and other components are stored on the Secretary's desk in the Lodge Room.

***Required Procedures.***

1. Pre-meeting - Broadcast Engineer checks...

- a. Confirm computer connections from the dbx signal processing and Black Magic interface units.
  - Plug in Audio cable from BlackMagic
  - Plug in USB cable from dbx signal processor
  - Plug in HDMI cable from video monitors
  - Ensure Microphone is set to BlackMagic
    - Cable is plugged into headset position
    - Microphone in "open" position
  - Ensure "Host" computer has set view for "Speaker" so the speaker is the main image see on screen.
- b. Perform camera operational check to confirm settings and connections.
- c. Check volume settings at audio mixer (in room behind treasurer).

**III. Internet Conferencing Management (Hosting)** - Zoom, or other chosen conferencing product, requires pre-meeting administrative tasks including: (1) meeting announcement and registration invitation; (2) participation sign-in details to all registered participants; (3) host acceptance of participants wishing to log-in for the meeting.

***Required Procedures.*** Webinars can require pre-registration, with the option for the host to add custom registration questions, or registration can be turned off for attendees to join by simply clicking a link at the time of the webinar. Webinars can be held once, reoccur in a series, or can be the same session held multiple times.

## 1. Scheduling a Webinar

- a. Sign in to the Zoom web portal.
  - Use Acct: [secretary@AlexandriaScottishRite.org](mailto:secretary@AlexandriaScottishRite.org)  
Password: See: John Suit KCCH or Ill Dave Morris 33rd
- b. In the navigation menu, click [Webinars](#). You will see a list of scheduled webinars.
- c. Select 'Schedule a Webinar'.
- d. Choose the desired [webinar settings](#). These are pre-configured for the account.

## 2. Registration process. Select the Registration option to require registration. If registration is required and the webinar is a reoccurring event, specify one of the following options:

- a. Attendees register once and can attend any of the occurrences: Registrants can attend all of the occurrences. All dates and times of the webinar will be listed and the registrant will be registered for all occurrences.
- b. Attendees need to register for each occurrence to attend: Registrants need to register separately for each occurrence to attend. They can only choose one date and time on the registrant page.
- c. Attendees register once and can choose one or more occurrences to attend: Registrants register once and can choose one or more occurrences to attend. They will need to select which dates and times they would like to attend and they will only be registered for those occurrences. They can choose multiple options.
- d. Note: If you schedule a [recurring webinar](#) with registration, editing the recurring webinar will cause you to lose registration data, meaning registrants will have to register again.

## 3. Automatic Registration Approval

- a. With your webinar now scheduled. Scroll down to the bottom of the webinar details page to view the registration options under Invite Attendees.  
Next to Approval, it will list Automatically Approve or Manually Approve.
- b. If it lists Manually Approve, click Edit on the right side.
- c. In the Registration tab, select Automatically Approve.
- d. Click Save All.
- e. Copy the registration URL or the invitation to share with your attendees.

## 4. Meeting log-in process

- a. Open Browser.
- b. Go to [join.zoom.us](https://join.zoom.us).
- c. Enter your meeting ID provided by the host/organizer.
- d. Click Join. If this is your first time joining from Google Chrome, you will be asked to open the Zoom client to join the meeting.

5. Protocol placard to be displayed for all remote participants at log-in showing
  - a. Placard states “The Alexandria AASR Meeting will begin directly following the meeting opening”
  - b. Placard states “Please use the Raise Hand function, if you would like to be recognized within the lodge room.” Please note, “Rules of conduct and decorum apply on zoom as they do in lodge”

*[Zoom Reference: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/204619915>]*

6. Inviting attendees and panelists
  - a. Panelists AASR Meeting (Presenter(s)) are full participants in the meeting. They can view and send video, screen share, annotate, etc. Panelists do not count towards the maximum number of attendees for your webinar, but rather are limited by your maximum meeting capacity. Please note that panelists will receive an email invitation separate from the attendees of the Webinar, which includes their unique join URL and other joining information.
  - b. Attendees AASR Meeting (Membership) are view-only participants, who can be unmuted if the host chooses. Their view of the webinar is controlled by the host. The maximum number of attendees is determined by your webinar license (500, 1000, 3000, etc.). They can interact with the host and the panelists through the Q&A and in-webinar chat.
  - c. If the webinar requires registration, the host will need to share the registration link and have the attendees complete the registration form. Once registered, they will receive an email notification with a unique join link. If an attendee tries to join with a generic join link or the Webinar ID, they will be routed to the registration page to complete registration.
  - d. This process is for sending the invitation to the AASR Alexandria Secretary for submission.
  - e. Copy the registration URL and send via email to [secretary@alexandriascottishrite.org](mailto:secretary@alexandriascottishrite.org)
7. Starting a webinar. There are a few ways that you can start your webinar.
  - a. *Sign in to the Zoom web portal and click Webinars.*
  - b. *Find the webinar, and click Start.*
  - c. *In the Zoom desktop client, click on the Meetings tab.*
  - d. *If you have added this to your calendar, click on the link displayed on your calendar reminder. Make sure that you are logged into your Zoom account before clicking the link.*

**IV. Training Requirements** - Various training requirements will be addressed separately from this SOP which is intended to provide a checklist for pre-meeting preparations and for the actual conduct of the hybrid meeting. These requirements will be met through a combination the following:

- A. *Lodge Announcements and Bulletin Notices*** will be used to inform the membership and to reinforce their understanding of general guidelines for internet based meeting registration, sign-in and participation.
  - B. *Technical training sessions*** will be used to prepare new personnel for specific support functions that are conducted in the Valley spaces prior to, during and following the hybrid meetings.
  - C. *Checklists*** will be attached to or near certain system components requiring pre-meeting set-up or adjustment for proper operation during the meeting. These components include the internet conference host computer (currently located near the Treasurer's desk) and the Lodge room central computer interface for broadcast production (now located near the Secretary's desk).
- V. *Future System Enhancements*** - A number of potential future initiatives were identified during the analysis of our Valley audio/video capabilities. The enhancements focused on the possible standardization of audio components used in both the Valley meetings and Reunion activities in the auditorium to achieve simplified training and support demands. Additionally, expansion of communications capabilities to include backstage, wardrobe, lodge room, and KSA event support members for improved coordination will also be considered as a possible future enhancement. When any future system enhancements are approved and introduced, they will be addressed in subsequent revisions to this Standard Operating Procedures document.