

**MINNESOTA OPEN MEETING LAW  
PROPOSED STATUTORY REVISIONS**

**13D.01 MEETINGS MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC; EXCEPTIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **In executive branch, local government.** All meetings, including executive sessions, must be open to the public

(a) of a state

(1) agency,

(2) board,

(3) commission, or

(4) department, when required or permitted by law to transact public business in a meeting;

(b) of the governing body of a

(1) school district however organized,

(2) unorganized territory,

(3) county,

(4) statutory or home rule charter city,

(5) town, or

(6) other public body;

(c) of any

(1) committee,

(2) subcommittee,

(3) board,

(4) department, or

(5) commission, of a public body; and

(d) of the governing body or a committee of:

- (1) a statewide public pension plan defined in section 356A.01, subdivision 24; or
- (2) a local public pension plan governed by section 69.77, sections 69.771 to 69.775, or chapter 354A, 422A, or 423B.

Subd. 2. **Exceptions.** This chapter does not apply

- (1) to meetings of the commissioner of corrections;
- (2) to a state agency, board, or commission when it is exercising quasi-judicial functions involving disciplinary proceedings; or
- (3) as otherwise expressly provided by statute.

Subd. 3. **Subject of and grounds for closed meeting.** Before closing a meeting, a public body shall state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.

Subd. 4. **Public comment.** Each public body shall provide an opportunity for public comment at meetings. Public comment shall be subject only to time, place and manner restrictions.

Subd. ~~5~~4. **Votes to be kept in journal.** (a) The votes of the members of the state agency, board, commission, or department; or of the governing body, committee, subcommittee, board, department, or commission on an action taken in a meeting required by this section to be open to the public must be recorded in a journal kept for that purpose.

(b) The vote of each member must be recorded on each appropriation of money, except for payments of judgments, claims, and amounts fixed by statute.

Subd. ~~5~~6. **Public access to journal.** The journal must be open to the public during all normal business hours where records of the public body are kept.

Subd. ~~6~~7. **Public copy of members' materials.** (a) In any meeting which under subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, and section 13D.02 must be open to the public, at least one copy of any printed materials relating to the agenda items of the meeting prepared or distributed by or at the direction of the governing body or its employees and:

- (1) distributed at the meeting to all members of the governing body;
- (2) distributed before the meeting to all members; or
- (3) available in the meeting room to all members; shall be available in the meeting room for inspection by the public while the governing body considers their subject matter.

(b) This subdivision does not apply to materials classified by law as other than public as defined in chapter 13, or to materials relating to the agenda items of a closed meeting held in accordance with the procedures in section 13D.03 or other law permitting the closing of meetings.

Subd. 8. **Taping or filming.** Any person may record the proceedings at meetings required to be open by this chapter by tape, film or other means. The public body holding the meeting shall prescribe reasonable rules to govern the right to make such recordings and shall adopt these rules by law and make available copies of these rules at each meeting to any interested persons. The public body holding the meeting must allow any person to use the electrical outlet for taping and/or filming purposes within fifteen minutes prior to the start of the meeting, during the meeting and for fifteen minutes after the meeting to record the proceedings, may not charge any cost for the use of the outlet and may not require that the individual using the outlet physically attend the meeting to tape and/or film the meeting.

Subd. 9. **Exclusion from meeting.** A person shall not be excluded from a meeting otherwise open to the public except for a breach of the peace actually committed at the meeting.

### **13D.02 MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY INTERACTIVE TV; CONDITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Conditions.** A meeting governed by section 13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, and this section may be conducted by interactive television so long as:

- (1) all members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear and see one another and can hear and see all discussion and testimony presented at any location at which at least one member is present;
- (2) members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear and see all discussion and testimony and all votes of members of the body;
- (3) at least one member of the body is physically present at the regular meeting location; and
- (4) each location at which a member of the body is present is open and accessible to the public.

Subd. 2. **Members are present for majority of quorum, participation.** Each member of a body participating in a meeting by electronic means is considered present at the meeting for purposes of determining a majority of a quorum and participating in all proceedings.

Subd. 3. **Monitoring from remote site; costs.** If interactive television is used to conduct a meeting, to the extent practical, a public body shall allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location. The body may require the person making such a connection to pay for documented marginal costs that the public body incurs as a result of the additional connection.

Subd. 4. **Notice of regular and all member sites.** If interactive television is used to conduct a regular, special, or emergency meeting, the public body shall provide notice of the regular meeting location and notice of any site where a member of the public body will be participating

in the meeting by interactive television. The timing and method of providing notice must be as described in section 13D.04.

### **13D.021 MEETINGS BY TELEPHONE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC MEANS; CONDITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Conditions.** A meeting governed by this section and section 13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, may be conducted by telephone or other electronic means so long as the following conditions are met:

(1) the presiding officer, chief legal counsel, or chief administrative officer for the affected governing body determines that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under section 13D.02 is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under chapter 12;

(2) all members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony;

(3) members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear all discussion and testimony and all votes of the members of the body, unless attendance at the regular meeting location is not feasible due to the health pandemic or emergency declaration;

(4) at least one member of the body, chief legal counsel, or chief administrative officer is physically present at the regular meeting location, unless unfeasible due to the health pandemic or emergency declaration; and

(5) all votes are conducted by roll call, so each member's vote on each issue can be identified and recorded.

Subd. 2. **Members are present for a majority of a quorum, participation.** Each member of the body participating in a meeting by telephone or other electronic means is considered present at the meeting for purposes of determining a **majority of a quorum** and participating in all proceedings.

Subd. 3. **Monitoring from remote site; costs.** If telephone or another electronic means is used to conduct a meeting, to the extent practical, the body shall allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location. The body may require the person making a connection to pay for the documented additional cost that the body incurs as a result of the additional connection.

Subd. 4. **Notice of regular and all member sites.** If telephone or another electronic means is used to conduct a regular, special, or emergency meeting, the public body shall provide notice of the regular meeting location, of the fact that some members may participate by telephone or other electronic means, and of the provisions of subdivision 3. The timing and method of providing notice is governed by section 13D.04 of the Open Meeting Law.

### 13D.03 CLOSED MEETINGS FOR LABOR NEGOTIATIONS STRATEGY.

Subdivision 1. **Procedure.** (a) Section 13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, 5, subdivision n 13D.02 do not apply to a meeting held pursuant to the procedure in this section.

(b) The governing body of a public employer may by a majority vote in a public meeting decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals, conducted pursuant to sections 179A.01 to 179A.25.

(c) The time of commencement and place of the closed meeting shall be announced at the public meeting.

(d) A written roll of members and all other persons present at the closed meeting shall be made available to the public after the closed meeting.

Subd. 2. **Meeting must be recorded.** (a) The proceedings of a closed meeting to discuss negotiation strategies shall be tape-recorded at the expense of the governing body.

(b) The recording shall be preserved for two years after the contract is signed and shall be made available to the public after all labor contracts are signed by the governing body for the current budget period.

Subd. 3. **If violation claimed.** (a) If an action is brought claiming that public business other than discussions of labor negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals was transacted at a closed meeting held pursuant to this section during the time when the tape is not available to the public, the court shall review the recording of the meeting in camera.

(b) If the court finds that this section was not violated, the action shall be dismissed and the recording shall be sealed and preserved in the records of the court until otherwise made available to the public pursuant to this section.

(c) If the court finds that this section was violated, the recording may be introduced at trial in its entirety subject to any protective orders as requested by either party and deemed appropriate by the court.

### 13D.04 NOTICE OF MEETINGS.

Subdivision 1. **Regular meetings.** (a) A schedule of the regular meetings of a public body shall be kept on file at its primary offices. ~~If a public body decides to hold a regular meeting at a time or place different from the time or place stated in its schedule of regular meetings, it shall give the same notice of the meeting that is provided in this section for a special meeting.~~

~~(b) Every public body shall give public notice of the schedule of regular meetings at the~~

beginning of each calendar or fiscal year and shall state the regular dates, times, and places of such meetings. An agenda for each regular meeting shall be posted at the principal office of the public body and at the location where the meeting is to be held at least 48 hours in advance of the holding of the meeting. A public body that has a website that the full-time staff of the public body maintains shall also post on its website the agenda of any regular meetings of the governing body of that public body. Any agenda of a regular meeting that is posted on a public body's website shall remain posted on the website until the regular meeting is concluded. The requirement of a regular meeting agenda shall not preclude the consideration of items not specifically set forth in the agenda.

(c) Public notice of any special meeting except a meeting held in the event of a bona fide emergency, or of any rescheduled regular meeting, or of any reconvened meeting, shall be given at least 48 hours before such meeting, which notice shall also include the agenda for the special, rescheduled, or reconvened meeting, but the validity of any action taken by the public body which is germane to a subject on the agenda shall not be affected by other errors or omissions in the agenda. The requirement of public notice of reconvened meetings does not apply to any case where the meeting was open to the public and (1) it is to be reconvened within 24 hours, or (2) an announcement of the time and place of the reconvened meeting was made at the original meeting and there is no change in the agenda. Notice of an emergency meeting shall be given as soon as practicable, but in any event prior to the holding of such meeting, to any news medium which has filed an annual request for notice under subsection (b) of this section. In addition, a public body that has a website that the full-time staff of the public body maintains shall post notice on its website of all meetings of the governing body of the public body. Any notice of an annual schedule of meetings shall remain on the website until a new public notice of the schedule of regular meetings is approved. Any notice of a regular meeting that is posted on a public body's website shall remain posted on the website until the regular meeting is concluded.

Subd. 2. **Special meetings.** (a) For a special meeting, except an emergency meeting or a special meeting for which a notice requirement is otherwise expressly established by statute, the public body shall post written notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting on the principal bulletin board of the public body, or if the public body has no principal bulletin board, on the door of its usual meeting room.

(b) The notice shall also be mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings with the public body. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting.

(c) As an alternative to mailing or otherwise delivering notice to persons who have filed a written request for notice of special meetings, the public body may publish the notice once, at least three days before the meeting, in the official newspaper of the public body or, if there is none, in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the area of the public body's authority.

(d) A person filing a request for notice of special meetings may limit the request to notification of meetings concerning particular subjects, in which case the public body is required to send notice to that person only concerning special meetings involving those subjects.

(e) A public body may establish an expiration date for requests for notices of special meetings pursuant to this subdivision and require refiling of the request once each year.

(f) Not more than 60 days before the expiration date of a request for notice, the public body shall send notice of the refiling requirement to each person who filed during the preceding year.

**Subd. 3. Emergency meetings.** (a) For an emergency meeting, the public body shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of the meeting to each news medium that has filed a written request for notice if the request includes the news medium's telephone number.

(b) Notice of the emergency meeting shall be given by telephone or by any other method used to notify the members of the public body.

(c) Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the members.

(d) Notice shall include the subject of the meeting. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting is not required.

(e) An "emergency" meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the public body, require immediate consideration by the public body.

(f) If matters not directly related to the emergency are discussed or acted upon at an emergency meeting, the minutes of the meeting shall include a specific description of the matters.

(g) The notice requirement of this subdivision supersedes any other statutory notice requirement for a special meeting that is an emergency meeting.

**Subd. 4. Recessed or continued meetings.** (a) If a meeting is a recessed or continued session of a previous meeting, and the time and place of the meeting was established during the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, then no further published or mailed notice is necessary.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, the term "meeting" includes a public hearing conducted pursuant to chapter 429 or any other law or charter provision requiring a public hearing by a public body.

Subd. 5. All meetings. Agendas for all regular, special, emergency, recessed or continued meetings must include sufficient detail to reasonably inform the public regarding what matters shall be discussed and what actions shall be taken. At least one copy of the notice for regular, special, emergency, recessed or continued meetings must be posted outside the building so that members of the public have access to the notice if the office or building is closed.

Subd. **56. Closed meetings.** The notice requirements of this section apply to closed meetings.

Subd. **67. State agencies.** For a meeting of an agency, board, commission, or department of the state:

(1) the notice requirements of this section apply only if a statute governing meetings of the agency, board, or commission does not contain specific reference to the method of providing notice; and

(2) all provisions of this section relating to publication are satisfied by publication in the State Register.

Subd. **78. Actual notice.** If a person receives actual notice of a meeting of a public body at least 24 hours before the meeting, all notice requirements of this section are satisfied with respect to that person, regardless of the method of receipt of notice.

**13D.045 MINUTES.** (a) All public bodies shall keep written minutes of all their meetings, whether open or closed, and a verbatim record of all their closed meetings in the form of an audio or video recording. Minutes shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) the date, time and place of the meeting;

(2) the members of the public body recorded as either present or absent; and

(3) a detailed summary of discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of any votes taken.

(b) A public body shall make proposed minutes available for public inspection within 8 business days after the meeting to which the minutes refer. The public body shall make approved minutes available for public inspection within 5 business days after the meeting at which the minutes are approved by the public body.

(c) The verbatim record shall be preserved for two years, subject to the following conditions. If an action is brought claiming that public business not covered by a closed meeting exemption was transacted at a closed meeting held pursuant to this section during the time when the tape is not available to the public, the court shall review the recording of the meeting in camera. If the court finds that this section was not violated, the action shall be dismissed and the recording shall be sealed and preserved in the records of the court until otherwise made available to the public pursuant to this section. If the court finds that this section was violated, the recording may be introduced at trial in its entirety subject to any protective orders as requested by either party and deemed appropriate by the court.

(d) Each public body shall meet on no less than a monthly basis to review minutes of all closed meetings. At such meetings a determination shall be made, and reported in an



open session that (1) the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes or (2) that the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection.

(e) Unless the public body has made a determination that the verbatim recording no longer requires confidential treatment or otherwise consents to disclosure, the verbatim record of a meeting closed to the public shall not be open for public inspection or subject to discovery in any administrative or judicial proceeding other than one brought to enforce this chapter. In the case of a civil action brought to enforce this chapter, the court, if the judge believes such an examination is necessary, must conduct such in camera examination of the verbatim record as it finds appropriate in order to determine whether there has been a violation of this chapter. In the case of a criminal proceeding, the court may conduct an examination in order to determine what portions, if any, must be made available to the parties for use as evidence in the prosecution. Any such initial inspection must be held in camera. If the court determines that a complaint or suit brought for noncompliance under this Act is valid it may, for the purposes of discovery, redact from the minutes of the meeting closed to the public any information deemed to qualify under the attorney-client privilege. The provisions of this subsection do not supersede the privacy or confidentiality provisions of state or federal law.

(f) Minutes of meetings closed to the public shall be available only after the public body determines that it is no longer necessary to protect the public interest or the privacy of an individual by keeping them confidential.

### **13D.05 MEETINGS HAVING DATA CLASSIFIED AS NOT PUBLIC.**

Subdivision 1. **General principles.** (a) Except as provided in this chapter, meetings may not be closed to discuss data that are not public data.

(b) Data that are not public data may be discussed at a meeting subject to this chapter without liability or penalty, if the disclosure relates to a matter within the scope of the public body's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the public body.

(c) Data discussed at an open meeting retain the data's original classification; however, a record of the meeting, regardless of form, shall be public.

Subd. 2. **When meeting must be closed.** (a) Any portion of a meeting must be closed if expressly required by other law or if the following types of data are discussed:

(1) data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults;

(2) active investigative data as defined in section 13.82, subdivision 7, or internal affairs data relating to allegations of law enforcement personnel misconduct collected or created by a state

agency, statewide system, or political subdivision;

(3) educational data, health data, medical data, welfare data, or mental health data that are not public data under section 13.32, 13.3805, subdivision 1, 13.384, or 13.46, subdivision 2 or 7; or

(4) an individual's medical records governed by sections 144.291 to 144.298.

(b) A public body shall close one or more meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority. If the members conclude that discipline of any nature may be warranted as a result of those specific charges or allegations, further meetings or hearings relating to those specific charges or allegations held after that conclusion is reached must be open. A meeting must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.

**Subd. 3. What meetings may be closed.** (a) A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The public body shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the public body shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.

(b) Meetings may be closed if the closure is expressly authorized by statute ~~or permitted by the attorney-client privilege.~~

(c) A public body may close a meeting:

(1) to determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the government entity;

(2) to review confidential or nonpublic appraisal data under section 13.44, subdivision 3; and

(3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property. Before holding a closed meeting under this paragraph, the public body must identify on the record the particular real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting. The proceedings of a meeting closed under this paragraph must be tape recorded at the expense of the public body. The recording must be preserved for eight years after the date of the meeting and made available to the public after all real or personal property discussed at the meeting has been purchased or sold or the governing body has abandoned the purchase or sale. The real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting must be specifically identified on the tape. A list of members and all other persons present at the closed meeting must be made available to the public after the closed meeting. If an action is brought claiming that public business other than discussions allowed under this paragraph was transacted at a closed meeting held under this paragraph during the time when the tape is not available to the public, section 13D.03, subdivision 3, applies.

An agreement reached that is based on an offer considered at a closed meeting is contingent on approval of the public body at an open meeting. The actual purchase or sale must be approved

at an open meeting after the notice period required by statute or the governing body's internal procedures, and the purchase price or sale price is public data.

(d) Meetings may be closed to receive security briefings and reports, to discuss issues related to security systems, to discuss emergency response procedures and to discuss security deficiencies in or recommendations regarding public services, infrastructure and facilities, if disclosure of the information discussed would pose a danger to public safety or compromise security procedures or responses. Financial issues related to security matters must be discussed and all related financial decisions must be made at an open meeting. Before closing a meeting under this paragraph, the public body, in describing the subject to be discussed, must refer to the facilities, systems, procedures, services, or infrastructures to be considered during the closed meeting. A closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the governing body, and the recording must be preserved for at least four years.

(e) Meetings may be closed to discuss litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable and imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. Only verbal or written notice of potential litigation satisfies the requirement that litigation is probable and imminent.

Subd. 4. **Invalidation of final actions.** The court of competent jurisdiction where the administrative office of the governing body is located shall have the jurisdiction to invalidate a final action taken at a closed session not in accordance with this chapter. The court shall not have jurisdiction to invalidate a decision of a public body for a violation of this chapter unless an action is commenced pursuant to this chapter within 120 days after the approved minutes are made available to the public by the public body. The procedures set forth in Section 13D.06 apply to invalidation of a final action. In any case where an action has been initiated to invalidate a decision of a public body on the ground that it was not taken in conformity with the requirements of this chapter, the public body may not reenact the disputed decision in conformity with this chapter in order to evade liability.

#### **13D.06 CIVIL FINES; FORFEITURE OF OFFICE; OTHER REMEDIES.**

Subdivision 1. **Personal liability for \$31,000 fine.** Any person who intentionally violates this chapter shall be subject to personal liability in the form of a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$31,000 for a single occurrence, which may not be paid by the public body.

Subd. 2. **Who may bring action; where.** (a) An action to enforce the penalty in subdivision 1 may be brought by any person in any court of competent jurisdiction where the administrative office of the governing body is located.

(b) Where the provisions of this chapter are not complied with, a civil or criminal action may be brought by the State's Attorney of the county in which such noncompliance may occur or the State Attorney General's office.

(c) Any person violating any of the provisions of this chapter shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Subd. 3. **Forfeit office if three violations.** (a) If a person has been found to have intentionally violated this chapter in three or more actions brought under this chapter involving the same governing body, such person shall forfeit any further right to serve on such governing body or in any other capacity with such public body for a period of time equal to the term of office such person was then serving.

(b) The court determining the merits of any action in connection with any alleged third violation shall receive competent, relevant evidence in connection therewith and, upon finding as to the occurrence of a separate third violation, unrelated to the previous violations, issue its order declaring the position vacant and notify the appointing authority or clerk of the governing body.

(c) As soon as practicable thereafter the appointing authority or the governing body shall fill the position as in the case of any other vacancy.

Subd. 4. **Other remedies; requirements; limits.** (a) In addition to other remedies, the court may award reasonable costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney fees of up to \$13,000 to any party in an action under this chapter. Attorneys' fees must be provided regardless of whether the plaintiff was represented by an attorney or represented himself or herself.

(b) Attorneys' fees or costs awarded to a State's Attorney shall be provided to the county where the State's Attorney's office is based. Attorneys' fees or costs awarded to the Attorney General shall be provided to the state. The court may award costs and attorney fees to a defendant only if the court finds that the action under this chapter was frivolous and without merit.

(c) A public body may pay any costs, disbursements, or attorney fees incurred by or awarded against any of its members in an action under this chapter.

(d) No monetary penalties or attorney fees may be awarded against a member of a public body unless the court finds that there was a specific intent to violate this chapter.

### **13D.065 INFORMATION POLICY ANALYSIS DIVISION.**

(a) Effective January 1, 2010, the legislative branch of the state government shall create an independent regulatory body in the office of the Minnesota Department of Administration's Information Policy Analysis Division with the power and authority to enforce this chapter.

(b) The Information Policy Analysis Division serves the following purposes: offering education and training programs to government officials, the public and the media; answering questions concerning this chapter; working to resolve disputes under this chapter; and working to ensure compliance with the chapter.

(c) In furtherance of those purposes, the Information Policy Analysis Division may, at the Division's discretion, issue opinions regarding a public body's compliance with the chapter.

(d) If there is a proceeding under section 13D.06 of this chapter and the Information Policy Analysis Division has previously issued an opinion requiring specific action but the public body refuses to comply within a reasonable time, upon motion of the plaintiff the court may consider the public body's refusal willful and act in accordance with section 13D.06 of this chapter.

**13D.07 CITATION.**

This chapter may be cited as the "Minnesota Open Meeting Law."