

RS 42:11

CHAPTER 1-A. OPEN MEETINGS LAW

§11. Short title

This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Open Meetings Law".
Acts 2010, No. 861, §18.

NOTE: Former R.S. 42:11 was redesignated as R.S. 42:26 by Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:12

§12. Public policy for open meetings; liberal construction

A. It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that public business be performed in an open and public manner and that the citizens be advised of and aware of the performance of public officials and the deliberations and decisions that go into the making of public policy. Toward this end, the provisions of this Chapter shall be construed liberally.

B. Further, to advance this policy, all public bodies shall post a copy of this Chapter.

Added by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1; Acts 1999, No. 467, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

NOTE: Former R.S. 42:12 was redesignated as R.S. 42:27 by Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:13

§13. Definitions

A. For the purposes of this Chapter:

(1) "Consent agenda" means a grouping of procedural or routine agenda items that can be approved with general discussion.

(2) "Meeting" means the convening of a quorum of a public body to deliberate or act on a matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power. It shall also mean the convening of a quorum of a public body by the public body or by another public official to receive information regarding a matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

(3) "Public body" means village, town, and city governing authorities; parish governing authorities; school boards and boards of levee and port commissioners; boards of publicly operated utilities; planning, zoning, and airport commissions; and any other state, parish, municipal, or special district boards, commissions, or authorities, and those of any political subdivision thereof, where such body possesses policy making, advisory, or administrative functions, including any committee or subcommittee of any of these bodies enumerated in this paragraph.

(4) "Quorum" means a simple majority of the total membership of a public body.

B. The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to chance meetings or social gatherings of members of a public body at which there is no vote or other action taken, including formal or informal polling of the members.

Added by Acts 1979, No. 681, §1. Amended by Acts 1981, Ex.Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 1988, No. 821, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2013, No. 416, §1.

NOTE: Former R.S. 42:13 was redesignated as R.S. 42:28 by Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:14

§14. Meetings of public bodies to be open to the public

A. Every meeting of any public body shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to R.S. 42:16, 17, or 18.

B. Each public body shall be prohibited from utilizing any manner of proxy voting procedure, secret balloting, or any other means to circumvent the intent of this Chapter.

C. All votes made by members of a public body shall be viva voce and shall be recorded in the minutes, journal, or other official, written proceedings of the body, which shall be a public document.

D. Except school boards, which shall be subject to R.S. 42:15, each public body conducting a meeting which is subject to the notice requirements of R.S. 42:19(A) shall allow a public comment period at any point in the meeting prior to action on an agenda item upon which a vote is to be taken. The governing body may adopt reasonable rules and restrictions regarding such comment period.

E.(1) Each public body that has the capability to allow any member of the public with a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act or a designated caregiver of such a person to participate in its meetings via teleconference or video conference as defined in R.S. 42:17.2 shall adopt rules, regulations, and procedures to regulate and facilitate participation via teleconference or video conference for any such person who prior to the meeting requests that accommodation.

(2) Each public body that does not have the capability to allow any member of the public with a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act or a designated caregiver of such a person to participate in its meetings via teleconference or video conference as defined in R.S. 42:17.2 shall adopt rules, regulations, and procedures to facilitate viable alternative methods for a member of the public with a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act or a designated caregiver of such a person who so requests to participate in its meetings.

(3) The requirements of this Subsection shall not be applicable during an executive session held in accordance with law, during any meeting that is sequestered in accordance with law, or to any public body included in R.S. 42:17.2(I).

(4) State agencies as defined by R.S. 49:951 shall promulgate rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act to implement this Subsection.

Added by Acts 1952, No. 484, §1. Amended by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1; Acts 1977, No. 707, §1; Acts 1978, No. 456, §1; Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 1981, Ex.Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 1989, No. 55, §1; Acts 2001, No. 285, §1; Acts 2010, No. 850, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2023, No. 393, §1.

RS 42:15

§15. School board meetings; public comment

A. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, each school board subject to the provisions of this Chapter, except as provided in Subsection B of this Section, shall allow public comment at any meeting of the school board prior to taking any vote. The comment period shall be for each agenda item and shall precede each agenda item.

B. The Orleans Parish School Board, at any meeting of the school board, shall provide an opportunity for public comment subject to reasonable rules, regulations, and restrictions as adopted by the school board.

C. For purposes of this Section, a comment period for all comments at the beginning of a meeting shall not suffice to meet the requirements of Subsection A or Subsection B of this Section.

Acts 1997, No. 895, §1, eff. July 10, 1997; Acts 2005, No. 474, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2011, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 35, §1.

RS 42:16

§16. Executive Sessions

A public body may hold executive sessions upon an affirmative vote, taken at an open meeting for which notice has been given pursuant to R.S. 42:19, of two-thirds of its constituent members present. An executive session shall be limited to matters allowed to be exempted from discussion at open meetings by R.S. 42:17; however, no final or binding action shall be taken during an executive session. The vote of each member on the question of holding such an executive session and the reason for holding such an executive session shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the meeting. Nothing in this Section or R.S. 42:17 shall be construed to require that any meeting be closed to the public, nor shall any executive session be used as a subterfuge to defeat the purposes of this Chapter.

Acts 1952, No. 484, §1. Amended by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1; Acts 1977, No. 707, §1; Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

E. The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to meetings of the Louisiana Governor's Mansion Advisory Commission.

Added by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1. Amended by Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 1982, No. 215, §1; Acts 1989, No. 389, §1; Acts 2003, No. 336, §1, eff. June 13, 2003; Acts 2006, No. 90, §1, eff. May 25, 2006; Acts 2009, No. 196, §7, eff. July 1, 2009; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2011, No. 188, §1; Acts 2012, No. 811, §15, eff. July 1, 2012; Acts 2014, No. 628, §1; Acts 2021, No. 66, §2, eff. June 4, 2021; Acts 2024, No. 237, §3, eff. May 23, 2024.

§17. Exceptions to open meetings

A. A public body may hold an executive session pursuant to R.S. 42:16 for one or more of the following reasons:

(1) Discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of a person, provided that such person is notified in writing at least twenty-four hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, before the scheduled time contained in the notice of the meeting at which such executive session is to take place and that such person may require that such discussion be held at an open meeting. However, nothing in this Paragraph shall permit an executive session for discussion of the appointment of a person to a public body or, except as provided in R.S. 39:1593(C)(2)(c), for discussing the award of a public contract. In cases of extraordinary emergency, written notice to such person shall not be required; however, the public body shall give such notice as it deems appropriate and circumstances permit.

(2) Strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining, prospective litigation after formal written demand, or litigation when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body.

(3) Discussion regarding the report, development, or course of action regarding security personnel, plans, or devices, including discussions concerning cybersecurity plans, financial security procedures, and assessment and implementation of any such plans or procedures.

(4) Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct.

(5) Cases of extraordinary emergency, which shall be limited to natural disaster, threat of epidemic, civil disturbances, suppression of insurrections, the repelling of invasions, or other matters of similar magnitude.

(6) Any meeting of the State Mineral and Energy Board at which records or matters entitled to confidential status by existing law are required to be considered or discussed by the board with its staff or with any employee or other individual, firm, or corporation to whom such records or matters are confidential in their nature, and are disclosed to and accepted by the board subject to such privilege, for the exclusive use in evaluating lease bids or development covering state-owned lands and water bottoms, which exception is proved pursuant to and consistently with the Public Records Act, being Chapter 1 of Title 44 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended, and other statutes to which the board is subject.

(7) Discussions between a city or parish school board and individual students or the parents or tutors of such students, or both, who are within the jurisdiction of the respective school system, regarding problems of such students or their parents or tutors; provided however that any such parent, tutor, or student may require that such discussions be held in an open meeting.

(8) Presentations and discussions at meetings of civil service boards of test questions, answers, and papers produced and exhibited by the office of the state examiner, municipal fire and police civil service, pursuant to R.S. 33:2492 or 2552.

(9) The portion of any meeting of the Second Injury Board during which records or matters regarding the settlement of a workers' compensation claim are required to be considered or discussed by the board with its staff in order to grant prior written approval as required by R.S. 23:1378(A)(6).

(10) Or any other matters now provided for or as may be provided for by the legislature.

B. The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to judicial proceedings.

C. The provisions of this Chapter shall not prohibit the removal of any person or persons who willfully disrupt a meeting to the extent that orderly conduct of the meeting is seriously compromised.

D. The provisions of R.S. 42:19 and R.S. 42:20 shall not apply to any meeting of a private citizens' advisory group or a private citizens' advisory committee established by a public body, when the members of such group or committee do not receive any compensation and serve only in an advisory capacity, except textbook advisory committees of the State Department of Education or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. However, all other provisions contained in this Chapter shall be applicable to such group or committee and the public body which established such group or committee shall comply with the provisions of R.S. 42:19 in providing the required notice of meetings of such group or committee.

RS 42:17.1

§17.1. Exception for meetings during a gubernatorially declared disaster or emergency

A. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter to the contrary, a public body may conduct and its members may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means provided:

(1) The governor has declared a state of emergency or disaster involving a geographic area within the jurisdiction of the public body and the nature of the emergency or disaster would cause a meeting of the public body conducted pursuant to the other provisions of this Chapter to be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the public.

(2) The presiding officer of the public body certifies on the notice of the meeting that the agenda of the meeting is limited to one or more of the following:

(a) Matters that are directly related to the public body's response to the disaster or emergency and are critical to the health, safety, or welfare of the public.

(b) Matters that if they are delayed will cause curtailment of vital public services or severe economic dislocation and hardship.

(c) Matters that are critical to continuation of the business of the public body and that are not able to be postponed to a meeting held in accordance with the other provisions of this Chapter due to a legal requirement or other deadline that cannot be postponed or delayed by the public body.

(d) Other matters that are critical or time-sensitive and that in the determination of the presiding officer should not be delayed; however, such matters shall not be considered at the meeting unless the members of the body present at the meeting approve the consideration of the matters by a two-thirds vote.

(3) The public body and its presiding officer comply with all of the requirements of this Section.

B. No later than twenty-four hours prior to a meeting conducted pursuant to the provisions of this Section, the public body shall provide for all of the following:

(1) The notice and agenda for the meeting, which shall be posted on the website of the public body, emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body, and widely distributed to every known news media outlet that broadcasts or publishes news within the geographic area within the jurisdiction of the public body.

(2) Detailed information regarding how members of the public may participate in the meeting and submit comments regarding matters on the agenda, which information shall be posted on the website of the public body, emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body, and widely distributed to every known news media outlet that broadcasts or publishes news within the geographic area within the jurisdiction of the public body.

C. For each meeting conducted pursuant to this Section:

(1) The public body shall provide a mechanism to receive public comment electronically both prior to and during the meeting.

(2) The public body shall properly identify and acknowledge all public comments during the meeting and shall maintain those comments in its record of the meeting.

(3) The presiding officer of the public body shall ensure that each person participating in the meeting is properly identified.

(4) The presiding officer shall ensure that all parts of the meeting, excluding any matter discussed in executive session, are clear and audible to all participants in the meeting including the public.

D. For the purposes of this Section, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Meeting via electronic means" shall mean a meeting occurring via teleconference or video conference.

(2) "Teleconference" shall mean a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to hear and otherwise communicate with each other.

(3) "Video conference" shall mean a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to see, hear, and otherwise communicate with each other.

Acts 2020, No. 302, §2, eff. June 12, 2020; Acts 2020, 2nd Ex. Sess., No. 43, §1, eff. Oct. 28, 2020.

R.S. 49:951 shall promulgate the rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

F.(1) Except as otherwise provided in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection, each public body that conducts meetings via electronic means pursuant to this Section shall limit the number of its regularly scheduled meetings via electronic means to no more than one-third in a calendar year, shall limit the number of successive meetings via electronic means to a reasonable number, and shall, to the extent practicable, publish a schedule of its meetings indicating which upcoming meetings will be conducted via electronic means and which will be conducted only in person.

(2) Any public body that is strictly advisory or that primarily focuses on issues dealing with disabilities or assisting military families may conduct successive meetings via electronic means without limitation and shall, to the extent practicable, publish a schedule of its meetings indicating which upcoming meetings will be conducted via electronic means and which will be conducted only in person.

G. No member of a public body who participates in a meeting via electronic means shall be eligible to or receive per diem for attendance at the meeting.

H.(1) Except as provided in Subsection I of this Section, the provisions of this Section shall apply to any public body which has powers, duties, or functions that are not limited to a particular political subdivision or region and that conducts at least six regularly scheduled meetings in a calendar year.

(2) However, no licensing or regulatory public body shall conduct a disciplinary hearing or adjudication via electronic means pursuant to this Section.

I. The provisions of this Section shall not apply to:

(1) The legislature, either house of the legislature, or any committee of the legislature or either house of the legislature.

(2) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(3) The Board of Regents.

(4) The Board of Ethics or Ethics Adjudicatory Board.

(5) The State Civil Service Commission.

(6) The board of directors of the Louisiana Citizens Property Insurance Corporation.

(7) The State Board of Commerce and Industry.

(8) The board of supervisors for the Louisiana State University System, the University of Louisiana System, the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges System, or the Southern University System.

(9) Any parish board of election supervisors.

Acts 2022, No. 723, §2, eff. June 18, 2022; Acts 2023, No. 393, §1.

RS 42:17.2

§17.2. Exception for certain meetings of certain public bodies

A. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter to the contrary, a public body identified in Subsection H of this Section may conduct and its members may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means provided that all of the requirements of this Section are met.

B. No later than twenty-four hours prior to a meeting conducted pursuant to the provisions of this Section, the public body shall provide for all of the following:

(1) The notice and agenda for the meeting, which shall be posted on the website of the public body, emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body, and posted and distributed as otherwise required by this Chapter and by law.

(2) Detailed information regarding how members of the public may participate in the meeting and submit comments regarding matters on the agenda, which information shall be posted on the website of the public body and emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body.

C. For each meeting conducted pursuant to this Section, the following requirements shall apply:

(1) The presiding officer shall be present and shall preside over the meeting at the anchor location. The anchor location shall be open to the public. Any member of the public body or the public shall be allowed to participate in person at the anchor location.

(2) The public body shall provide a mechanism to receive public comment electronically in the manner it prescribes prior to and, to the extent practical, during the meeting.

(3) The public body shall identify and acknowledge all public comments inclusive of those received in person during the meeting and those received in writing or electronically prior to any submission deadline for the meeting and shall maintain those comments in its record of the meeting.

(4) The presiding officer of the public body shall ensure all of the following:

(a) That each person participating in the meeting is properly identified.

(b) That all parts of the meeting, excluding any matter discussed in executive session, are clear and audible to all participants in the meeting including the public.

(c) That the voting decision of each participating member of the public body on each matter is clearly identified during each vote during the meeting and recorded and included in the archive of the meeting.

(5) If the public body is aware of a technical problem that causes the meeting to no longer be audible, or if applicable, visible and audible to the public, the meeting shall be recessed until the problem is resolved. If the problem is not resolved within one hour, the meeting shall be adjourned and the presiding officer shall make an effort to alert all participants to that fact.

(6) The meeting shall be recorded and made available to the public in an online archive located on the public body's website for at least two years.

(7) All documents made available to members of the public in attendance at the anchor location shall be made available electronically to members of the public participating electronically to the extent practical.

D. For the purposes of this Section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Anchor location" shall mean the public location at which the public body holds in-person meetings or is specifically equipped with the technology necessary to meet via electronic means.

(2) "Meeting via electronic means" shall mean a meeting at which one or more members of a public body or members of the public participate via teleconference or video conference.

(3) "Teleconference" shall mean a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to hear and otherwise communicate with each other.

(4) "Video conference" shall mean a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to see, hear, and otherwise communicate with each other.

E.(1) All members of the public body participating in a meeting held pursuant to this Section, either at the anchor location or via electronic means, shall be counted for the purpose of establishing a quorum and may vote.

(2) Each public body conducting meetings pursuant to this Section shall adopt rules, regulations, and procedures to allow the public to participate in the meeting via electronic means. State agencies as defined by

RS 42:17.2.1

§17.2.1. Public body; member with a disability

A. Notwithstanding any provision of this Chapter that requires a member of a public body to be physically present in order to be counted for a quorum and to participate and vote in a meeting, a member of a public body who has a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act shall be allowed to participate and vote in a meeting via electronic means as defined in R.S. 42:17.2.

B. Each public body shall adopt rules, regulations, and procedures to facilitate the requirements of Subsection A of this Section. State agencies as defined by R.S. 49:951 shall promulgate the rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

C. The provisions of Subsections A and B of this Section shall not apply to members of the legislature or any parish board of election supervisors.

Acts 2023, No. 393, §1.

RS 42:17.4

§17.4. Exception for meetings of the Prescription Monitoring Program Advisory Council

A. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Prescription Monitoring Program Advisory Council, as provided in R.S. 40:1005, may conduct and its members may attend and participate in a meeting via electronic means if the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy, the advisory council, and its presiding officer comply with all of the requirements of this Section.

B. No later than twenty-four hours prior to a meeting conducted pursuant to the provisions of this Section, the advisory council shall provide for all of the following:

(1) The notice and agenda for the meeting, which shall be posted on the website of the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy, emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body, and widely distributed to every known news media outlet that broadcasts or publishes news within the geographic area within the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy.

(2) Detailed information regarding how members of the public may participate in the meeting and submit comments regarding matters on the agenda, which information shall be posted on the website of the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy, emailed to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of meetings of the public body, and widely distributed to every known news media outlet that broadcasts or publishes news within the geographic area within the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy.

C. For each meeting conducted pursuant to this Section, all of the following requirements shall apply:

(1) The advisory council shall provide a mechanism to receive public comment electronically both prior to and during the meeting.

(2) The advisory council shall properly identify and acknowledge all public comments during the meeting and shall maintain those comments in its record of the meeting.

(3) The presiding officer of the advisory council shall ensure that each person participating in the meeting is properly identified.

(4) The presiding officer shall ensure that all parts of the meeting, excluding any matter discussed in executive session, are clear and audible to all participants in the meeting including the public.

D. For the purposes of this Section, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

(1) "Meeting via electronic means" means a meeting occurring via teleconference or video conference.

(2) "Teleconference" means a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to hear and otherwise communicate with each other.

(3) "Video conference" means a method of communication which enables persons in different locations to participate in a meeting and to see, hear, and otherwise communicate with each other.

Acts 2023, No. 14, §2.

RS 42:18

§18. Executive or closed meetings of legislative houses and committees

A. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of R.S. 42:16 and 17, executive or closed meetings may be held by the legislature, either house thereof, or any committee or subcommittee of either house, upon the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members of the house or the committee or subcommittee thereof making the determination to hold such meeting, for one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) Discussion of confidential communications.
- (2) Discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of any person subject to contract with or to employment, election, or appointment or confirmation of appointment by either house of the legislature or any committee or subcommittee of either or by any other public body.
- (3) Strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining, prospective litigation after formal written demand, or litigation when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the legislature, either house thereof, or any committee or subcommittee of either house.
- (4) Discussion regarding a report, development, or course of action regarding security personnel, plans, or devices.
- (5) Investigations by the legislature, either house thereof, or by any committee or subcommittee thereof, including the Legislative Audit Advisory Council or any other joint or statutory committee, whenever reasonable grounds exist to believe that the testimony to be elicited will reflect a failure of compliance with law.
- (6) Cases of extraordinary emergency, which shall be limited to natural disaster, threat of epidemic, civil disturbances, suppression of insurrections, the repelling of invasions, or other matters of similar magnitude.
- (7) Discussion by either house of the legislature, or any committee or subcommittee thereof, of any matter affecting the internal operations or management of the body.
- (8) Any other matters provided by law or pursuant to the joint rules of the legislature.

B. All procedural matters pertaining to the necessity, purposes, or reasons for the holding of executive or closed meetings under the provisions of this Section shall be in accordance with such rules as are adopted by each of the houses of the legislature for the purpose.

C. The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to chance meetings, social gatherings, or other gatherings at which only presentations are made to members of the legislature or members of either house thereof or of any committee or subcommittee if no vote or other action, including formal or informal polling of members, is taken.

Added by Acts 1981, Ex.Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

via the Internet pursuant to this Subparagraph or the inability of the public to access the public body's website due to any type of technological failure shall not be a violation of the provisions of this Chapter.

(b) Giving notice to any member of the public or the news media who requests notice of such meetings by providing the notice to the requestor at the same time and in the same manner as it is given to members of the public body.

(c) Submitting a notice of each meeting to the commissioner of administration in the manner required by R.S. 49:1303 and 1305.1

B. Reasonable public notice of day to day sessions of either house of the legislature, and of all matters pertaining to such meetings, including but not necessarily restricted to the content of notices, quorums for the transaction of business, proxy voting, viva-voce votes, and recordation of votes, shall be governed by the provisions of the Louisiana Constitution, the rules of procedure of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the Joint Rules applicable to both houses. Reasonable public notice of meetings of legislative committees and subcommittees shall be given in accordance with such rules as are adopted by the respective houses for the purpose.

Added by Acts 1952, No. 484, §1. Amended by Acts 1972, No. 669, §1; Acts 1976, No. 665, §1; Acts 1977, No. 707, §1; Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 1981, Ex.Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 1989, No. 390, §1; Acts 2008, No. 131, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2012, No. 461, §1; Acts 2012, No. 747, §1, eff. June 12, 2012; Acts 2013, No. 416, §1; Acts 2014, No. 628, §1; Acts 2024, No. 191, §1; Acts 2024, No. 539, §1; Acts 2024, No. 617, §1.

NOTE: See Acts 2012, No. 747, §2 regarding public bodies that do not have a website.

RS 42:19

§19. Notice of meetings

A.(1)(a) All public bodies, except the legislature and its committees and subcommittees, shall give written public notice of their regular meetings, if established by law, resolution, or ordinance, at the beginning of each calendar year. Such notice shall include the dates, times, and places of such meetings.

(b)(i) All public bodies, except the legislature and its committees and subcommittees, shall give written public notice of any regular, special, or rescheduled meeting no later than twenty-four hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, before the meeting.

(ii)(aa) Such notice shall include the agenda, date, time, and place of the meeting. The agenda shall not be changed less than twenty-four hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

(bb) Each item on the agenda shall be listed separately and described with reasonable specificity. Before the public body may take any action on an item, the presiding officer or his designee shall read aloud the description of the item except as otherwise provided in Subitem (dd) of this Item.

(cc) Upon unanimous approval of the members present at a meeting of a public body, the public body may take up a matter not on the agenda. Any such matter shall be identified in the motion to take up the matter not on the agenda with reasonable specificity, including the purpose for the addition to the agenda, and entered into the minutes of the meeting. Prior to any vote on the motion to take up a matter not on the agenda by the public body, there shall be an opportunity for public comment on any such motion in accordance with R.S. 42:14 or 15. The public body shall not use its authority to take up a matter not on the agenda as a subterfuge to defeat the purposes of this Chapter.

(dd) If an agenda of a meeting of either the parish governing authority or the parish school board in a parish with a population of one hundred twenty-five thousand or more according to the latest federal decennial census or the governing authority of a municipality with a population of one hundred thousand or more according to the latest federal decennial census contains more than fifty items, the governing authority or school board may take action on items listed on a consent agenda without reading the description of each item aloud. However, before any action is taken on items listed on a consent agenda, the governing authority or school board shall allow a public comment period. Any item listed on a consent agenda may be removed from the consent agenda by an individual member of the governing authority or school board if a person objects to the presence of the item on the consent agenda and provides reasons for individual discussion at the meeting. The name of the person who objects to a consent agenda item and the reasons for the objection shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.

(iii) Following the above information there shall also be attached to the written public notice of the meeting, whether or not such matters will be discussed in an executive session held pursuant to R.S. 42:17(A)(2):

(aa) A statement identifying the court, case number, and the parties relative to any pending litigation to be considered at the meeting.

(bb) A statement identifying the parties involved and reasonably identifying the subject matter of any prospective litigation for which formal written demand has been made that is to be considered at the meeting.

(iv) In cases of extraordinary emergency, such notice shall not be required; however, the public body shall give such notice of the meeting as it deems appropriate and circumstances permit.

(c) Each public body subject to R.S. 42:23(B)(2) shall include on its written public notice sufficient information to enable the public to locate the broadcast for viewing.

(2) Written public notice given by all public bodies, except the legislature and its committees and subcommittees, shall include but need not be limited to:

(a) Posting a copy of the notice at the principal office of the public body holding the meeting, or if no such office exists, at the building in which the meeting is to be held; or by publication of the notice in an official journal of the public body no less than twenty-four hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, before the scheduled time of the meeting. If the public body has a website, additionally by providing notice via the Internet on the website of the public body for no less than twenty-four hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, immediately preceding the meeting. The failure to timely post notice

RS 42:19.1

§19.1. Procedure for the proposal, increase, renewal, or continuation of a tax or for calling an election for such purposes by political subdivisions

A.(1) Except as provided for in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection, in addition to any other requirements provided for in R.S. 42:19 or other provisions of law, public notice of the date, time, and place of any meeting at which a political subdivision as defined in Article VI, Section 44(2) of the Constitution of Louisiana intends to propose a new ad valorem property tax or sales and use tax, or increase or renew any existing ad valorem property tax or sales and use tax, and authorize the calling of an election for submittal of such question to the voters of the political subdivision shall be published in the official journal of the political subdivision no more than sixty days nor less than twenty days before such public meeting; shall be announced to the public during the course of a public meeting of such political subdivision no more than sixty days nor less than twenty days before such public meeting; and notice of such meeting shall be written and hand delivered or transmitted by email to each voting member of any governing authority of a political subdivision that is required to approve such a measure previously adopted by another governing authority and to each state senator and representative in whose district all or a portion of the political subdivision is located, no more than sixty days nor less than twenty days before such public meeting. Email delivery shall be made to the official email address of such voting members or legislators and to any other address provided in writing to the political subdivision by such a voting member or legislator. The inadvertent failure to notify a state senator or representative as required by this Subsection shall not constitute a violation of this Section; however, the knowing failure to notify a state senator or representative as required by this Subsection or the willful disregard of the requirement to notify a state senator or representative as required by this Subsection shall constitute a violation of this Chapter.

(2) If at a meeting held in accordance with Paragraph (1) of this Subsection a political subdivision adopts such a measure, the provisions of this Section shall not apply to a subsequent meeting of such political subdivision if the only action taken at the subsequent meeting is one which results in a change to the previously adopted measure that reduces the rate or term of the tax in the measure and thereby reduces the total amount of tax that would be collected under the measure, or substantially reduces the cost to the political subdivision of any bond or debt obligation to be incurred by the political subdivision.

B.(1) In the event of cancellation or postponement of a meeting at which consideration of or action upon a proposal to increase, renew, or continue any ad valorem or sales and use tax and authorize the calling of an election for submittal of such questions to the voters of the political subdivision was scheduled, notice of the date, time, and place of any subsequent meeting to consider such proposal shall be published in the official journal of the political subdivision no less than ten days before such subsequent meeting.

(2) However, in the event that consideration of or action upon any such proposal was postponed at the scheduled meeting, or any such proposal was considered at the scheduled meeting without action or vote, then any subsequent meeting to consider such proposal shall be subject to the requirements of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

Acts 2013, No. 267, §1; Acts 2014, No. 694, §1, eff. Aug. 1, 2014; Acts 2014, No. 791, §15; Acts 2018, No. 486, §1.

RS 42:20

§20. Written minutes

A. All public bodies shall keep written minutes of all of their open meetings. The minutes to be kept by the legislature and legislative committees and subcommittees shall be governed by the provisions of R.S. 42:21. The minutes of all other public bodies 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.
- (3) The substance of all matters decided, and, at the request of any member, a record, by individual member, of any votes taken.
- (4) Any other information that the public body requests be included or reflected in the minutes.

B.(1) The minutes shall be public records and shall be available within a reasonable time after the meeting, except where such disclosures would be inconsistent with R.S. 42:16, 17, and 18, or rules adopted under the provisions of R.S. 42:21.

(2) If the public body has a website, the public body shall post on its website a copy of the minutes made available pursuant to Paragraph (1) of this Subsection and shall maintain the copy of those minutes on the website for at least three months after the posting. If the public body is required to publish its minutes in an official journal, the public body shall post its minutes on its website as required by this Paragraph within ten days after publication in the official journal. If the public body is not required to publish its minutes in an official journal, the public body shall post its minutes on its website as required by this Paragraph within a reasonable time after the meeting. The inability of the public to access the public body's website due to any type of technological failure shall not be a violation of the provisions of this Chapter.

Added by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1. Amended by Acts 1981, Ex.Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2014, No. 628, §1.

RS 42:21

§21. Minutes of legislative sessions, legislative committees and subcommittees

A. The journals of the proceedings of each of the houses of the legislature, as required to be kept by the provisions of Article III, Section 10(B) of the Louisiana Constitution, shall constitute the written minutes of open sessions of the Senate and of the House of Representatives.

B. The written minutes of standing, interim, joint, and other committees and subcommittees of the Senate and House of Representatives shall include such information as may be required by the rules of the respective houses.

Added by Acts 1981, Ex. Sess., No. 21, §1, eff. Nov. 19, 1981; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:22

§22. Presentation and consideration of offer to sell natural gas to a public body, or to operate or acquire ownership of, a gas utility owned or operated by a public body

A. For the purposes of this Section, "gas utility" means any revenue producing business or organization which is owned or operated by a public body, and which regularly supplies the public with natural gas at retail.

B. Prior to consideration or action by a public body to accept a proposal by a nonpublic entity to sell natural gas to a public body for use in its gas distribution system sales to retail customers for a term exceeding twelve months including rollovers or extensions, or to assume operation or acquire ownership of, a gas utility being operated or owned by the public body, the proposal shall:

(1) Be introduced, in writing, at an open meeting of the public body.

(2) Not be considered by the public body until notice of the proposal has been published in the official journal of the public body and at least thirty days has lapsed after the introduction of the proposal.

(3) Include a written report of the most recent five-year history of the sale of natural gas to similar public bodies for use in gas distribution system sales to retail customers for a term exceeding twelve months including rollovers or extensions by the nonpublic entity if the entity is seeking to sell natural gas to a public body for use in its gas distribution system sales to retail customers for a term exceeding twelve months including rollovers or extensions to the public body or a five-year history of the purchase price of other gas utilities operated or owned by a public body paid by the nonpublic entity if the entity is seeking to assume operation or acquire ownership of the utility. A copy of the report shall be provided to all members of the public body and be available to the public.

(4) Include any written contract or agreement proposed between the nonpublic entity seeking to sell natural gas to a public body for use in its gas distribution system sales to retail customers for a term exceeding twelve months including rollovers or extensions to, or assume operation or acquire ownership of, the gas utility and the public body. A copy of the contract or agreement shall be provided to all members of the public body and be available to the public.

C. Notice of the proposal and the availability of the written report and contract or agreement shall be published once in the official journal of the public body. The notice shall indicate the time and place where the public body will hold a public hearing and consider the proposal.

D. No proposal shall be considered until a public hearing on it has been held. No proposal can be adopted at the meeting at which it is introduced.

E. Any proposed revision or amendment of the published contract or agreement shall be noticed, published, and made available in its entirety in the same manner as required for the original contract or agreement. No such contract or agreement shall be entered into by the public body until at least thirty days have lapsed since the notice of the availability of the revised contract or agreement has been published.

Acts 2003, No. 1274, §1, eff. July 11, 2003; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:23

§23. Audio and video recordings; live broadcast

A. All of the proceedings in a public meeting may be video or tape recorded, filmed, or broadcast live.

B.(1) Each nonelected board or commission that has the authority to levy a tax shall video or audio record, film, or broadcast live all proceedings in a public meeting.

(2)(a)(i) The parish governing authority in a parish with a population of twenty-five thousand or more shall broadcast live all of its proceedings in public meetings, including the parish governing authority's committee meetings.

(ii) Each school board in a parish with a population of twenty-five thousand or more shall broadcast live all of its proceedings in public meetings, including the school board's committee meetings.

(iii) Each governing authority of a municipality with a population of ten thousand or more shall broadcast live all city council meetings including city council committee meetings. There is no requirement to broadcast a committee meeting where members are volunteers.

(b) For purposes of this Paragraph, "broadcast live" means the publicly available distribution of audio and video of a meeting in real or near real time via the internet or television broadcast.

(c) The failure of a public body to broadcast live as required by this Paragraph due to a technological failure beyond the control of the public body or beyond its ability to resolve timely is not a violation of the provisions of this Chapter.

(d) The requirement in this Paragraph for a public body to broadcast its meetings does not apply to any executive session held in accordance with this Chapter.

C. A public body shall establish standards for the use of lighting, recording, or broadcasting equipment to ensure proper decorum in a public meeting.

Added by Acts 1952, No. 484, §1. Amended by Acts 1972, No. 669, §1; Acts 1989, No. 172, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2013, No. 363, §1, eff. June 17, 2013; Acts 2024, No. 539, §1.

RS 42:24

§24. Voidability

Any action taken in violation of this Chapter shall be voidable by a court of competent jurisdiction. A suit to void any action must be commenced within sixty days of the action.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 669, §2. Amended by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1; Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

§25. Enforcement

A. The attorney general shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter throughout the state. He may institute enforcement proceedings on his own initiative and shall institute such proceedings upon a complaint filed with him by any person, unless written reasons are given as to why the suit should not be filed.

B. Each district attorney shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter throughout the judicial district within which he serves. He may institute enforcement proceedings on his own initiative and shall institute such proceedings upon a complaint filed with him by any person, unless written reasons are given as to why the suit should not be filed.

C. Any person who has been denied any right conferred by the provisions of this Chapter or who has reason to believe that the provisions of this Chapter have been violated may institute enforcement proceedings.

Added by Acts 1976, No. 665, §1. Amended by Acts 1977, No. 707, §1; Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:26

§26. Remedies; jurisdiction; authority; attorney fees

A. In any enforcement proceeding the plaintiff may seek and the court may grant any or all of the following forms of relief:

- (1) A writ of mandamus.
- (2) Injunctive relief.
- (3) Declaratory judgment.
- (4) Judgment rendering the action void as provided in R.S. 42:24.
- (5) Judgment awarding civil penalties as provided in R.S. 42:28.

B. In any enforcement proceeding the court has jurisdiction and authority to issue all necessary orders to require compliance with, or to prevent noncompliance with, or to declare the rights of parties under the provisions of this Chapter. Any noncompliance with the orders of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

C. If a party who brings an enforcement proceeding pursuant to R.S. 42:25 prevails, the party shall be awarded reasonable attorney fees and other costs of litigation. If such party prevails in part, the court may award the party reasonable attorney fees or an appropriate portion thereof.

D. If the court finds that the proceeding was of a frivolous nature and was brought with no substantial justification, it may award reasonable attorney fees to the prevailing party.

Added by Acts 1979, No. 681, §1. Acts 1989, No. 54, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2019, No. 340, §1.

RS 42:27

§27. Venue; summary proceedings

A. Enforcement proceedings shall be instituted in the district court for the parish in which the meeting took place or will take place.

B. Enforcement proceedings shall be tried by preference and in a summary manner. Any appellate court to which the proceeding is brought shall place it on its preferential docket, shall hear it without delay, and shall render a decision as soon as practicable.

Added by Acts 1979, No. 681, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23.

RS 42:28

§28. Civil penalties

Any member of a public body who knowingly and wilfully participates in a meeting conducted in violation of this Chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed five hundred dollars per violation. The member shall be personally liable for the payment of such penalty. A suit to collect such penalty must be instituted within sixty days of the violation.

Acts 1989, No. 54, §1; Acts 2010, No. 861, §23; Acts 2019, No. 340, §1.