

Vermont's Open Meeting Law

General Information

Transparency is an essential element of open and democratic government. In Vermont, the primary means of providing transparency are the State's open meeting law, [1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314](#), and the public records law, [1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320](#). These laws implement the command of Chapter I, Article 6 of the Vermont Constitution that officers of government are "trustees and servants" of the people and are "at all times, in a legal way, accountable to them."

The Open Meeting Law clearly emphasizes the openness of and accessibility to government. It declares that "All meetings of a public body are declared to be open to the public at all times, except as provided in section 313 of this title [on executive sessions]." [1 V.S.A. § 312\(a\)](#). The Open Meeting Law and its requirements are meant to empower the public to play an effective role as not only an active participant in government but also a check on it as well.

Every municipal board, council, commission and committees (legally defined as "public bodies") of a municipality is required to comply with the Open Meeting Law. The Law applies when there is (1) a quorum of a public body; (2) involved in a discussion or taking action; and (3) the subject matter of the discussion is one over which the body has authority or responsibility.

[COVID-19 Related Changes 2023](#)

In response to the ongoing health concerns posed by COVID-19, the Governor signed [Act 1 \(H.42\) of 2023](#) on January 25, 2023. The Act is a temporary law that suspends certain provisions of Vermont's Open Meeting Law by allowing a quorum of a municipal public body to meet remotely, without designating a physical location for the public to attend. The Act also allows public bodies to electronically post meeting agendas and special meeting notices, with some additional requirements in those cases.

VLCT's Municipal Assistance Center (MAC) has current online resources on a variety of topics for your information. Please refer to our Open Meeting Law resources at the bottom of

this page.

We are also available to assist town officials with any Open Meeting Law related questions about their roles and responsibilities.