

Text of Open Meeting Act

Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes §§ 301-314

(As Amended Through Close of Forty-Seventh Oklahoma Legislature, Second Regular Session and First Extraordinary Session, 2000)

[Editor's Note: Bold face, italics and underlines were added for emphasis and clarity.
Comments and explanations not part of the act are enclosed in brackets.]

§ 301. Citation. — This act shall be known as the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

§ 302. Public policy. — It is the public policy of the State of Oklahoma to encourage and facilitate an informed citizenry's understanding of the governmental processes and governmental problems.

§ 303. Times and places — Advance notice. — All meetings of public bodies, as defined hereinafter, shall be held at specified times and places which are convenient to the public and shall be open to the public, except as hereinafter specifically provided. All meetings of such public bodies, except for executive sessions of the State Banking Board and Oklahoma Savings and Loan Board, shall be preceded by advance public notice specifying the time and place of each such meeting to be convened as well as the subject matter or matters to be considered at such meeting, as hereinafter provided.

304. Definitions. —

As used in the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act:

1. "Public body" means the governing bodies of all municipalities located within the State of Oklahoma, boards of county commissioners of the counties in the State of Oklahoma, boards of public and higher education in the State of Oklahoma and all boards, bureaus, commissions, agencies, trusteeships, authorities, councils, committees, public trusts, task forces or study groups in the State of Oklahoma supported in whole or in part by public funds or entrusted with the expending of public funds, or administering public property, and shall include all committees or subcommittees of any public body. It shall not mean the state judiciary, the Council on Judicial Complaints when conducting, discussing, or deliberating any matter relating to a complaint received or filed with the Council, or the State Legislature or administrative staffs of public bodies, including, but not limited to, faculty meetings and athletic staff meetings of institutions of higher education, when said staffs are not meeting with the public body, or entry-year assistance committees, as defined in Section 6-152 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Furthermore, it shall not mean the multidisciplinary team provided for in sub-

section B of Section 1-502.2 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes or any school board meeting for the sole purpose of considering recommendations of said multidisciplinary team and deciding the placement of any child who is the subject of such recommendations. Furthermore, it shall not mean meetings conducted by stewards designated by the Oklahoma Horse Racing Commission pursuant to Section 203.4 of Title 3A of the Oklahoma Statutes when the stewards are officiating at races or otherwise enforcing rules of the Commission;

2. "Meeting" means the conduct of business of a public body by a majority of its members being personally together or, as authorized by Section 307.1 of this title, together pursuant to a teleconference;

3. "Regularly scheduled meeting" means a meeting at which the regular business of the public body is conducted;

4. "Special meeting" means any meeting of a public body other than a regularly scheduled meeting or emergency meeting;

5. "Emergency meeting" means any meeting called for the purpose of dealing with an emergency. For purposes of this act, an emergency is defined as a situation involving injury to persons or injury and damage to public or personal property or immediate financial loss when the time requirements for public notice of a special meeting would make such procedure impractical and increase the likelihood of injury or damage or immediate financial loss;

6. "Continued or reconvened meeting" means a meeting which is assembled for the purpose of finishing business appearing on an agenda of a previous meeting. For the purposes of this act, only matters on the agenda of the previous meeting at which the announcement of the continuance is made may be discussed at a continued or reconvened meeting; and

7. **“Teleconference”** means a conference among members of a public body remote from one another who are linked by interactive telecommunication devices permitting both visual and auditory communication between and among members of the public body and members of the public.

§ 305. **Recording of votes.** — In all meetings of public bodies, the vote of each member must be publicly cast and recorded.

§ 306. **Circumvention of act — Teleconferences excepted.** — No informal gatherings or any electronic or telephonic communications, except teleconferences as authorized by Section 3 of this act, among a majority of the members of a public body shall be used to decide any action or to take any vote on any matter.

§ 307. **Executive sessions.**

A. No public body shall hold executive sessions unless otherwise specifically provided in this section.

B. Executive sessions of public bodies will be permitted only for the purpose of:

1. Discussing the employment, hiring, appointment, promotion, demotion, disciplining or resignation of any individual salaried public officer or employee;

2. Discussing negotiations concerning employees and representatives of employee groups;

3. Discussing the purchase or appraisal of real property;

4. Confidential communications between a public body and its attorney concerning a pending investigation, claim, or action if the public body, with the advice of its attorney, determines that disclosure will seriously impair the ability of the public body to process the claim or conduct a pending investigation, litigation, or proceeding in the public interest;

5. Permitting district boards of education to hear evidence and discuss the expulsion or suspension of a student when requested by the student involved or his parents, attorney or legal guardian;

6. Discussing matters involving a specific handicapped child;

7. Discussing any matter where disclosure of information would violate confidentiality requirements of state or federal law; or

8. Engaging in deliberations or rendering a final or intermediate decision in an individual proceeding pursuant to Article II of the Administrative Procedures Act.

C. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection B of this section, the following public bodies may hold executive sessions:

1. **The State Banking Board**, as provided for under Section 306.1 of Title 6 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

2. **The Oklahoma Industrial Finance Authority**, as provided for in Section 854 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

3. **The Oklahoma Development Finance Authority**, as provided for in Section 5062.6 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

4. **The Oklahoma Center for the Advance-ment of Science and Technology**, as provided for in Section 5060.7 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

5. **The Oklahoma Savings and Loan Board**, as provided for under subsection A of Section 381.74 of Title 18 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

6. **The Oklahoma Health Resource Committee** for purposes of conferring on matters pertaining to research and development of products, if public disclosure of the matter discussed would interfere with the development of patents, copyrights, products, or services;

7. **A review committee**, as provided for in Section 855 of Title 62 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

[A “review committee” may be appointed by a city, town, or county to study and recommend action on proposed projects for such things as neighborhood renewal, economic development and other plans. It determines project eligibility, appropriateness, and financing. Financial statements, marketing plans, trade secrets or other proprietary information submitted to the committee are confidential, except where the person submitting the material consents to disclosure.]

8. The Child Death Review Board for purposes of receiving and conferring on matters pertaining to materials declared confidential by law; and

9. All nonprofit foundations, boards, bureaus, commissions, agencies, trusteeships, authorities, councils, committees, public trusts, task forces or study groups supported in whole or part by public funds or entrusted with the expenditure of public funds for purposes of conferring on matters pertaining to economic development, including the transfer of property, financing, or the creation of a proposal to entice a business to locate within their jurisdiction if public disclosure of the matter discussed would interfere with the development of products or services or if public disclosure would violate the confidentiality of the business; and

10. The Oklahoma Indigent Defense System Board for purposes of discussing negotiating strategies in connection with making possible counteroffers to offers to contract to provide legal representation to indigent criminal defendants and indigent juveniles in cases for which the System must provide representation pursuant to the provisions of the Indigent Defense System Act, Section 1355 *et seq.* of Title 22 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

D. An executive session for the purpose of discussing the purchase or appraisal of real property shall be limited to members of the public body, the attorney for the public body, and the immediate staff of the public body. No landowner, real estate salesperson, broker, developer, or any other person who may profit directly or indirectly by a proposed transaction concerning real property which is under consideration may be present or participate in the executive session.

E. No public body may go into an executive session unless the following procedures are strictly complied with:

1. The proposed executive session is noted on the agenda as provided in Section 311 of this title;

2. The executive session is authorized by a majority vote of a quorum of the members present and the vote is a recorded vote; and

3. Except for matters considered in executive sessions of the State Banking Board and the Oklahoma Savings and Loan Board, and which are required by state or federal law to be confidential, any vote or action on any item of business considered in an executive session shall be taken in public meeting with the vote of each member publicly cast and recorded.

F. A willful violation of the provisions of this section shall:

1. Subject each member of the public body to criminal sanctions as provided in Section 214 of this title; and

2. Cause the minutes and all other records of the executive session, including tape recordings, to be immediately made public.

§ 307.1. Teleconferences.

A. No public body shall hold meetings by teleconference except:

1. Oklahoma Futures;

2. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education;

3. The Oklahoma Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision;

4. The State Board of Osteopathic Examiners;

5. The Board of Dentistry;

6. The Variance and Appeals Boards created in Sections 1021.1, 1697 and 1850.16 of Title 59 of the Oklahoma Statutes;

7. A public trust whose beneficiary is a municipality; however, no more than twenty percent (20%) of a quorum of the trustees may participate by teleconference and during any such meetings all votes shall be roll call votes;

8. The Native American Cultural and Education Authority;

9. The Corporation Commission; and

10. The State Board of Vocational and Technical Education.

B. No public body authorized to hold meetings by teleconference shall conduct an executive session by teleconference.

§ 308. Meeting between Governor and majority of members of public body. — Any meeting between the Governor and a majority of members of any public body shall be open to the public and subject to all other provisions of this act.

§ 309. **Legislature.** — The Legislature shall conduct open meetings in accordance with rules to be adopted by each house thereof.

§ 310. **Legislative committee members attending executive sessions.** — Any member of the Legislature appointed as a member of a committee of either house of the Legislature or joint committee thereof shall be permitted to attend any executive session authorized by the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act of any state agency, board or commission whenever the jurisdiction of such committee includes the actions of the public body involved.

§ 311. **Public bodies — Notice.**

A. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, all regularly scheduled, continued or reconvened, special or emergency meetings of public bodies shall be preceded by public notice as follows:

1. All **public bodies** shall give notice in writing by December 15 of each calendar year of the schedule showing the date, time and place of the regularly scheduled meetings of such public bodies for the following calendar year.

2. All **state** public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and other bodies with the state as beneficiary, shall give such notice to the Secretary of State.

3. All **county** public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and any other bodies with the county as beneficiary, shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein they are principally located.

4. All **municipal** public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and any other bodies with the municipality as beneficiary, shall give such notice to the municipal clerk of the municipality wherein they are principally located.

5. All **multicounty, regional, areawide** or **district** public bodies, including, but not limited to, district boards of education, shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein they are principally located, or if no office exists, to the county clerk of the county or counties served by such public body.

6. All **governing boards of state institutions of higher education**, and committees and subcommittees thereof, shall give such notice to the Secretary of State. All other public bodies covered by the provisions of this act which exist

under the auspices of a state institution of higher education, but a majority of whose members are not members of the institution's governing board, shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein the institution is principally located.

7. **The Secretary of State and each county clerk or municipal clerk** shall keep a record of all notices received in a register open to the public for inspection during regular office hours, and, in addition, shall make known upon any request of any person the contents of said register.

8. **If any change is to be made of the date, time or place** of regularly scheduled meetings of public bodies, then notice in writing shall be given to the Secretary of State or county clerk or municipal clerk, as required herein, not less than ten (10) days prior to the implementation of any such change.

9. **In addition** to the advance public notice in writing required to be filed for regularly scheduled meetings, all public bodies shall, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meetings, display public notice of said meeting, setting forth thereon the date, time, place and agenda for said meeting, such twenty-four (24) hours prior public posting shall exclude Saturdays and Sundays and holidays legally declared by the State of Oklahoma; provided, however, the posting of an agenda shall not preclude a public body from considering at its regularly scheduled meeting any new business. Such public notice shall be posted in prominent public view at the principal office of the public body or at the location of said meeting if no office exists. "New business," as used herein, shall mean any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting.

10. **In the event any meeting is to be continued or reconvened**, public notice of such action, including date, time and place of the continued meeting, shall be given by announcement at the original meeting. Only matters appearing on the agenda of the meeting which is continued may be discussed at the continued or reconvened meeting.

11. **Special meetings of public bodies** shall not be held without public notice being given at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to said meetings. Such public notice of date, time and place

shall be given in writing, in person or by telephonic means to the Secretary of State or to the county clerk or to the municipal clerk by public bodies in the manner set forth in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this section. The public body also shall cause written notice of the date, time and place of the meeting to be mailed or delivered to each person, newspaper, wire service, radio station, and television station that has filed a written request for notice of meetings of the public body with the clerk or secretary of the public body or with some other person designated by the public body. Such written notice shall be mailed or delivered at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the special meeting. The public body may charge a fee of up to Eighteen Dollars (\$18.00) per year to persons or entities filing a written request for notice of meetings, and may require such persons or entities to renew the request for notice annually. In addition, all public bodies shall, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such special meetings, display public notice of said meeting, setting forth thereon the date, time, place and agenda for said meeting. Only matters appearing on the posted agenda may be considered at said special meeting. Such public notice shall be posted in prominent public view at the principal office of the public body or at the location of said meeting if no office exists. Twenty-four (24) hours prior public posting shall exclude Saturdays and Sundays and holidays legally declared by the State of Oklahoma.

12. In the event of an emergency, **an emergency meeting of a public body may be held without the public notice** heretofore required. Should an emergency meeting of a public body be necessary, the person calling such a meeting shall give as much advance public notice as is reasonable and possible under the circumstances existing, in person or by telephonic or electronic means.

B. 1. All agendas required pursuant to the provisions of this section shall identify all items of business to be transacted by a public body at a meeting, including, but not limited to, any proposed executive session for the purpose of engaging in deliberations or rendering a final or intermediate decision in an individual proceeding prescribed by the Administrative Procedures Act.

2. If a public body proposes to conduct an executive session, the agenda shall:

- a. contain sufficient information for the public to ascertain that an executive session will be proposed;
- b. identify the items of business and purposes of the executive session; and
- c. state specifically the provision of Section 307 of this title authorizing the executive session.

§ 312. Minutes of meetings — Recording of Proceedings.

A. The proceedings of a public body shall be kept by a person so designated by such public body in the form of written minutes which shall be an official summary of the proceedings showing clearly those members present and absent, all matters considered by the public body, and all actions taken by such public body. The minutes of each meeting shall be open to public inspection and shall reflect the manner and time of notice required by this act.

B. In the written minutes of an emergency meeting, the nature of the emergency and the proceedings occurring at such meeting, including reasons for declaring such emergency meeting, shall be included.

C. Any person attending a public meeting may record the proceedings of said meeting by videotape, audiotape, or by any other method; provided, however, such recording shall not interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

§ 313. Actions taken in willful violation of act. — Any action taken in willful violation of this act shall be invalid.

§ 314. Violations — Misdemeanor — Penalty. — Any person or persons willfully violating any of the provisions of this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not exceeding Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not exceeding one (1) year or by both such fine and imprisonment