

<https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings>

[Municipal Division](#) > Open Meetings

## Quick Links

Public Records

Visit the Calendar Page



## Open Meetings

The purpose of the Open Meeting Law is to ensure transparent and accountable government. Building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vermont Legislature has updated the Open Meeting Law [with Act 133 \(S.55\)](#) to recognize that hybrid and remote access to meetings can strengthen civic engagement and support transparent, efficient decision-making.

### Open Meeting Law Training Video



**Beginning July 1, 2024, public bodies must comply with [Act 133 \(S.55\)](#), which amends the Open Meeting Law as follows:**

- Distinguishes among State and local “nonadvisory” and “advisory” bodies.
  - A “nonadvisory” body has supervision, control, or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or budgetary matters. For ease of reference, SOS refers to nonadvisory bodies as decision-making bodies.
  - An “advisory” body does *not* have any of the above powers.
- Authorizes remote-only meetings for advisory public bodies, subject to remote public participation requirements, and for all public bodies under specified emergency circumstances (emergency meetings, declared states of emergency, and “local incidents”).
- Beginning January 1, 2025, requires hybrid meetings for State decision-making (nonadvisory) bodies.
- Upon request, provides a limited right to local residents, the body’s members, and the press for in-person or remote access to any regular meeting.
- Requires State and local decision-making (nonadvisory) bodies to electronically record meetings and post the recordings in a designated electronic location. (Includes similar requirements for certain informational meetings and hearings held in advance of a town’s annual and special meetings of the voters.)
- Requires each municipality to post on its website, if it maintains or designates one, the procedures for filing an OML complaint and the text of the relevant statute, [1 V.S.A. § 314](#).
- Beginning January 1, 2025, requires annual OML training for State chairs of decision-making (nonadvisory) bodies and for local chairs of legislative bodies,

municipal managers, and mayors. *See the training video above.*

- Establishes a workgroup, chaired by the Secretary of State, to recommend ways to improve access to and participation in meetings of public bodies, meetings of the voters, and elections.

**You can read the text of Act 133 (S.55) [here](#).**

**Joint guidance and FAQs from the Secretary of State, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont School Boards Association is available [here](#).**

**The Secretary of State's Act 133 Recordkeeping Chart is available [here](#).**

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Vermont's open meeting law requires all meetings of public bodies to be open to the public at all times, unless a specific exception applies. The purpose of the law is to promote transparency, accountability, and better decision-making in government.

In general, the open meeting law requires public bodies to:

- Provide advance public notice of meetings, including meeting agendas.
- Discuss all business and take all actions in open meeting, unless an exception in statute applies.
- Allow members of the public to attend and participate in meetings.
- Take meeting minutes and make them available to the public.

Secretary of State Resources:

- [A Guide to Open Meetings \(2019\)](#) (S.55 UPDATES COMING SOON)
- SOS Open Meeting Law training materials:
  - [OML 2024 PowerPoint](#) (long version)
  - [OML 2024 PowerPoint](#) (short version)
- [Joint Guidance/FAQ on 2024 Updates to Open Meeting Law \(ACT 133\): SOS, VLCT, and VSBA](#)
- [SOS Act 133 Recordkeeping Chart](#)

Other Resources:

- Vermont Statutes Online: [1 V.S.A. §§ 310–314](#) (open meetings)
  - [Act 133 \(S.55\) of 2024](#) (effective July 1, 2024)
  - Vermont Agency of Administration:
    - [Calendar of State agency public meetings](#)
    - [Public Meeting Request Form](#) (to post notice of State agency public meetings)
  - Vermont League of Cities & Towns:
    - [Vermont's Open Meeting Law](#) publications and resources for local officials
  - [Robert's Rules of Order](#) online
  - [Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual](#) (2005) (Vermont Land Use Training and Information Collaborative)
  - Vermont Institute for Government
    - [Born to Chair: An Introduction to the Science and Art of Chairing Board Meetings](#) (2020)
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Vermont Statutes Online