



# Conduct During a Meeting

---

## Citizen Participation

The Open Meetings Law (OML) ensures a citizen's right to attend and observe a meeting, but it does not require the body to allow the public to speak or actively participate.

- Law permits public comment periods, which must be included in the notice.
- During a public comment period, all the following apply:
  - The body **may** receive information from a member of the public.
  - The body **may** discuss any subject raised by the public.
  - The body **may not** take formal action, such as taking a vote.

## Accessibility

All meetings must be held in places reasonably accessible to all citizens.

- Hold meetings in property open to the public, in an unlocked room, and in facilities that people with disabilities can access without assistance.
- Include a contact person in the meeting notice who can provide reasonable accommodations. Consider, in advance (and be prepared to accommodate):
  - People who are hard of hearing, deaf, or deafblind.
  - People who live outside the area where the meeting will occur.
  - People who lack internet or telephone access.
  - People who are non-English speakers.

## Stick to Agenda Items

The purpose of posting a meeting notice under the OML is to tell the public everything that will be discussed during the meeting.

- If an item isn't noticed in the agenda (or related to an item on the agenda) – limit discussion and suggest raising at a future meeting when it's properly noticed.
- If public comment period is not included in the agenda, do not ask for public feedback.

## Voting

- Votes should be preceded by a motion and a second.
- No secret ballots – all votes should occur in the open.
- The standard would be to take a voice vote, but any member can request a **roll-call vote** (chair or administrator takes a roll call, and each member says "yes" or "no" when their name is called).

## Record Keeping

- All motions and roll-call votes must be recorded and preserved for public inspection. The easiest way to do this is to include motions and votes in the meeting minutes.
- Minutes are not expressly required under OML, but minutes are often required by other statutes.