

Public Finance, Judiciary, and Personnel Committee
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 4:00 PM
Columbus Community Building/Community Room
2500 14 Street
Columbus, NE 68601

The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to go into closed session as per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes. A current agenda is on file at City Hall, 2500 14 Street, Columbus, Nebraska. For more information, call 402-562-4224 or visit our website at www.columbusne.us.

{{Name: Agenda Item Name}}

1. Statement of Compliance with Open Meetings Act and roll call.

84-1407. Act, how cited.

Sections 84-1407 to 84-1414 shall be known and may be cited as the Open Meetings Act.

Source: Laws 2004, LB 821, § 34.

84-1408. Declaration of intent; meetings open to public.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of this state that the formation of public policy is public business and may not be conducted in secret.

Every meeting of a public body shall be open to the public in order that citizens may exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at meetings of public bodies, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of Nebraska, federal statutes, and the Open Meetings Act.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1071; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 35.

Annotations

- Nebraska's public meetings laws do not apply to school board deliberations pertaining solely to disputed adjudicative facts. *McQuinn v. Douglas Cty. Sch. Dist. No. 66*, 259 Neb. 720, 612 N.W.2d 198 (2000).
- The primary purpose of the public meetings law is to ensure that public policy is formulated at open meetings. *Marks v. Judicial Nominating Comm.*, 236 Neb. 429, 461 N.W.2d 551 (1990).
- The public meetings law is broadly interpreted and liberally construed to obtain the objective of openness in favor of the public, and provisions permitting closed sessions must be narrowly and strictly construed. *Grein v. Board of Education of Fremont*, 216 Neb. 158, 343 N.W.2d 718 (1984).
- Although a committee was a subcommittee of a natural resources district board, it was not subject to the Open Meetings Act because there was never a quorum of board members in attendance and the committee did not hold hearings, make policy, or take formal action on behalf of the board. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- A county board of equalization is a public body whose meetings shall be open to the public. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).

84-1409. Terms, defined.

For purposes of the Open Meetings Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1)(a) Public body means (i) governing bodies of all political subdivisions of the State of Nebraska, (ii) governing bodies of all agencies, created by the Constitution of Nebraska, statute, or otherwise pursuant to law, of the executive department of the State of Nebraska, (iii) all independent boards, commissions, bureaus, committees, councils, subunits, or any other bodies created by the Constitution of Nebraska, statute, or otherwise pursuant to law, (iv) all study or advisory committees of the executive department of the State of Nebraska whether having continuing existence or appointed as special committees with limited existence, (v) advisory committees of the bodies referred to in subdivisions (i), (ii), and (iii) of this subdivision, and (vi) instrumentalities exercising essentially public functions; and

(b) Public body does not include (i) subcommittees of such bodies unless a quorum of the public body attends a subcommittee meeting or unless such subcommittees are holding hearings, making policy, or taking formal action on behalf of their parent body, except that all meetings of any subcommittee established under section 81-15,175 are subject to the Open Meetings Act, (ii) entities conducting judicial proceedings unless a court or other judicial body is exercising rulemaking authority, deliberating, or deciding upon the issuance of administrative orders, and (iii) the Judicial Resources Commission or subcommittees or subgroups of the commission;

(2) Meeting means all regular, special, or called meetings, formal or informal, of any public body for the purposes of briefing, discussion of public business, formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action of the public body; and

(3) Virtual conferencing means conducting or participating in a meeting electronically or telephonically with interaction among the participants subject to subsection (2) of section 84-1412.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 2; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 1; Laws 1989, LB 429, § 42; Laws 1989, LB 311, § 14; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 124; Laws 1993, LB 635, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 1044, § 978; Laws 1997, LB 798, § 37; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 36; Laws 2007, LB296, § 810; Laws 2011, LB366, § 2; Laws 2021, LB83, § 11; Laws 2022, LB922, § 12.

Annotations

- A township is a political subdivision, and as such, a township board is subject to the provisions of the public meetings laws. *Steenblock v. Elkhorn Township Bd.*, 245 Neb. 722, 515 N.W.2d 128 (1994).
- A county agricultural society is a public body to which the provisions of the Nebraska public meetings law are applicable. *Nixon v. Madison Co. Ag. Soc'y*, 217 Neb. 37, 348 N.W.2d 119 (1984).
- Failure by a public governing body, as defined under section 84-1409, R.R.S.1943, to take and record a roll call vote on an action, as required by section 84-1413(2), R.S.Supp.,1980, grants any citizen the right to sue for the purpose of having the action declared void. In this case such failure could not be later corrected by a nunc pro tunc order because there was no showing that a roll call vote on the disputed action was actually taken, and even if it was the record showed it was not recorded until over a year later. Sections 23-1301, R.R.S.1943, and 23-1302, R.R.S.1943, make it the duty of the county clerk to record proceedings of the board of county commissioners. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 208 Neb. 69, 302 N.W.2d 674 (1981).
- Although a committee was a subcommittee of a natural resources district board, it was not subject to the Open Meetings Act because there was never a quorum of board members in attendance and the committee did not hold hearings, make policy, or take formal action on behalf of the board. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- Although the Open Meetings Act does not define "subcommittee," a subcommittee is generally defined as a group within a committee to which the committee may refer business. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- The Open Meetings Act does not require policymakers to remain ignorant of the issues they must decide until the moment the public is invited to comment on a proposed policy. By excluding nonquorum subgroups from the definition of a public body, the Legislature

has balanced the public's need to be heard on matters of public policy with a practical accommodation for a public body's need for information to conduct business. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).

- As an administrative agency of the county, a county board of equalization is a public body. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- The electors of a township at their annual meeting are a public body under the Open Meetings Act. *State ex rel. Newman v. Columbus Township Bd.*, 15 Neb. App. 656, 735 N.W.2d 399 (2007).
- The meeting at issue in this case was a "meeting" within the parameters of subsection (2) of this section because it involved the discussion of public business, the formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action of the public power district. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).
- Informational sessions in which the governmental body hears reports are briefings. *Johnson v. Nebraska Environmental Control Council*, 2 Neb. App. 263, 509 N.W.2d 21 (1993).

84-1410. Closed session; when; purpose; reasons listed; procedure; right to challenge; prohibited acts; chance meetings, conventions, or workshops.

(1) Any public body may hold a closed session by the affirmative vote of a majority of its voting members if a closed session is clearly necessary for the protection of the public interest or for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual and if such individual has not requested a public meeting. The subject matter and the reason necessitating the closed session shall be identified in the motion to close. Closed sessions may be held for, but shall not be limited to, such reasons as:

(a) Strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining, real estate purchases, pending litigation, or litigation which is imminent as evidenced by communication of a claim or threat of litigation to or by the public body;

(b) Discussion regarding deployment of security personnel or devices;

(c) Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct;

(d) Evaluation of the job performance of a person when necessary to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a person and if such person has not requested a public meeting;

(e) For the Community Trust created under section 81-1801.02, discussion regarding the amounts to be paid to individuals who have suffered from a tragedy of violence or natural disaster; or

(f) For public hospitals, governing board peer review activities, professional review activities, review and discussion of medical staff investigations or disciplinary actions, and any strategy session concerning transactional negotiations with any referral source that is required by federal law to be conducted at arms length.

Nothing in this section shall permit a closed meeting for discussion of the appointment or election of a new member to any public body.

(2) The vote to hold a closed session shall be taken in open session. The entire motion, the vote of each member on the question of holding a closed session, and the time when the closed session commenced and concluded shall be recorded in the minutes. If the motion to close

passes, then the presiding officer immediately prior to the closed session shall restate on the record the limitation of the subject matter of the closed session. The public body holding such a closed session shall restrict its consideration of matters during the closed portions to only those purposes set forth in the motion to close as the reason for the closed session. The meeting shall be reconvened in open session before any formal action may be taken. For purposes of this section, formal action shall mean a collective decision or a collective commitment or promise to make a decision on any question, motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance or formation of a position or policy but shall not include negotiating guidance given by members of the public body to legal counsel or other negotiators in closed sessions authorized under subdivision (1)(a) of this section.

(3) Any member of any public body shall have the right to challenge the continuation of a closed session if the member determines that the session has exceeded the reason stated in the original motion to hold a closed session or if the member contends that the closed session is neither clearly necessary for (a) the protection of the public interest or (b) the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual. Such challenge shall be overruled only by a majority vote of the members of the public body. Such challenge and its disposition shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require that any meeting be closed to the public. No person or public body shall fail to invite a portion of its members to a meeting, and no public body shall designate itself a subcommittee of the whole body for the purpose of circumventing the Open Meetings Act. No closed session, informal meeting, chance meeting, social gathering, email, fax, or other electronic communication shall be used for the purpose of circumventing the requirements of the act.

(5) The act does not apply to chance meetings or to attendance at or travel to conventions or workshops of members of a public body at which there is no meeting of the body then intentionally convened, if there is no vote or other action taken regarding any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 3; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 2; Laws 1985, LB 117, § 1; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 125; Laws 1994, LB 621, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1072; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 37; Laws 2004, LB 1179, § 1; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 1; Laws 2011, LB390, § 29; Laws 2012, LB995, § 17.

Annotations

- There is no absolute discovery privilege for communications that occur during a closed session. *State ex rel. Upper Republican NRD v. District Judges*, 273 Neb. 148, 728 N.W.2d 275 (2007).
- If a person present at a meeting observes a public meetings law violation in the form of an improper closed session and fails to object, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Wasikowski v. Nebraska Quality Jobs Bd.*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002).
- The public interest mentioned in this section is that shared by citizens in general and by the community at large concerning pecuniary or legal rights and liabilities. *Grein v. Board of Education*, 216 Neb. 158, 343 N.W.2d 718 (1984).
- Hearing in closed executive session was contrary to this section since there was no showing of necessity or reason under subdivision (1)(a), (b), or (c), but did not result in reversal of board decision. *Simonds v. Board of Examiners*, 213 Neb. 259, 329 N.W.2d 92

(1983).

- Negotiations for the purchase of land need not be conducted at an open meeting but the deliberations of a city council as to whether an offer to purchase real estate should be made should take place in an open meeting. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).
- Public meeting law was not violated where the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska voted to hold a closed session to consider the university president's resignation, and also discussed the appointment of an interim president during such session. *Meyer v. Board of Regents*, 1 Neb. App. 893, 510 N.W.2d 450 (1993).

84-1411. Meetings of public body; notice; method; contents; when available; right to modify; duties concerning notice; virtual conferencing authorized; requirements; emergency meeting without notice; appearance before public body; applicability of section.

(1) Until January 1, 2025:

(a) Except as provided in subsection (10) of this section, each public body shall give reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting as provided in this subsection. Such notice shall be transmitted to all members of the public body and to the public.

(b)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (1)(b)(ii) of this section, in the case of a public body described in subdivision (1)(a)(i) of section 84-1409 or such body's advisory committee, such notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and, if available, on such newspaper's website.

(ii) In the case of the governing body of a city of the second class or village or such body's advisory committee or the governing body of a rural or suburban fire protection district, such notice shall be published by:

(A) Publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and, if available, on such newspaper's website; or

(B) Posting written notice in three conspicuous public places in such city, village, or district. Such notice shall be posted in the same three places for each meeting.

(iii) In the case of a public body not described in subdivision (1)(b)(i) or (ii) of this section, such notice shall be given by a method designated by the public body.

(iv) In case of refusal, neglect, or inability of the newspaper to timely publish the notice, the public body shall (A) post such notice on its website, if available, and (B) post such notice in a conspicuous public place in such public body's jurisdiction. The public body shall keep a written record of such posting. The record of such posting shall be evidence that such posting was done as required and shall be sufficient to fulfill the requirement of publication.

(c) In addition to a method of notice required by subdivision (1)(b)(i) or (ii) of this section, such notice may also be provided by any other appropriate method designated by such public body or such advisory committee.

(d) Each public body shall record the methods and dates of such notice in its minutes.

(e) Such notice shall contain an agenda of subjects known at the time of the publicized notice or a statement that the agenda, which shall be kept continually current, shall be readily available for public inspection at the principal office of the public body during normal business hours.

Agenda items shall be sufficiently descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at the meeting. Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda shall not be altered later than (i) twenty-four hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting or (ii) forty-eight hours before the scheduled commencement of a meeting of a city council or village board scheduled outside the corporate limits of the municipality. The public body shall have the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at such public meeting.

(2) Beginning January 1, 2025:

(a) Except as provided in subsection (10) of this section, each public body shall give reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting as provided in this subsection. Such notice shall be transmitted to all members of the public body and to the public.

(b)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (2)(b)(ii) of this section, in the case of a public body described in subdivision (1)(a)(i) of section 84-1409 or such body's advisory committees, such notice shall be given by:

(A)(I) Publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction that is finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting, (II) posting on such newspaper's website, if available, and (III) posting on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper; or

(B)(I) Posting to the newspaper's website, if available, and (II) posting to a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers if no edition of a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction is to be finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper.

(ii) In the case of the governing body of a city of the second class or village, any advisory committee of such governing body, or the governing body of a rural or suburban fire protection district, such notice shall be given by:

(A)(I) Publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction that is finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting, (II) posting on such newspaper's website, if available, and (III) posting on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper;

(B)(I) Posting to the newspaper's website, if available, and (II) posting on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers if no edition of a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction is to be finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper; or

(C) Posting written notice in three conspicuous public places in such city, village, or district. Such notice shall be posted by the public body in the same three places for each meeting.

(iii) In the case of a public body not described in subdivision (2)(b)(i) or (ii) of this section, such notice shall be given by a method designated by the public body.

(iv) In case of refusal, neglect, or inability of the newspaper to publish the notice, the public

body shall (A) post such notice on its website, if available, (B) submit a post on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers, and (C) post such notice in a conspicuous public place in such public body's jurisdiction. The public body shall keep a written record of such posting. The record of such posting shall be evidence that such posting was done as required and shall be sufficient to fulfill the requirement of publication.

(3)(a) The following entities may hold a meeting by means of virtual conferencing if the requirements of subdivision (3)(b) of this section are met:

(i) A state agency, state board, state commission, state council, or state committee, or an advisory committee of any such state entity;

(ii) An organization, including the governing body, created under the Interlocal Cooperation Act, the Joint Public Agency Act, or the Municipal Cooperative Financing Act;

(iii) The governing body of a public power district having a chartered territory of more than one county in this state;

(iv) The governing body of a public power and irrigation district having a chartered territory of more than one county in this state;

(v) An educational service unit;

(vi) The Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council;

(vii) An organization, including the governing body, of a risk management pool or its advisory committees organized in accordance with the Intergovernmental Risk Management Act;

(viii) A community college board of governors;

(ix) The Nebraska Brand Committee;

(x) A local public health department;

(xi) A metropolitan utilities district;

(xii) A regional metropolitan transit authority; and

(xiii) A natural resources district.

(b) The requirements for holding a meeting by means of virtual conferencing are as follows:

(i) Reasonable advance publicized notice is given as provided in subsections (1) and (2) of this section, including providing access to a dial-in number or link to the virtual conference;

(ii) In addition to the public's right to participate by virtual conferencing, reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the public's right to attend at a physical site and participate as provided in section 84-1412, including reasonable seating, in at least one designated site in a building open to the public and identified in the notice, with: At least one member of the entity holding such meeting, or his or her designee, present at each site; a recording of the hearing by audio or visual recording devices; and a reasonable opportunity for input, such as public comment or questions, is provided to at least the same extent as would be

provided if virtual conferencing was not used;

(iii) At least one copy of all documents being considered at the meeting is available at any physical site open to the public where individuals may attend the virtual conference. The public body shall also provide links to an electronic copy of the agenda, all documents being considered at the meeting, and the current version of the Open Meetings Act; and

(iv) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, subsection (1) of section 70-1014, subsection (2) of section 70-1014.02, or subsection (4) of section 79-2204, no more than one-half of the meetings of the state entities, advisory committees, boards, councils, organizations, or governing bodies are held by virtual conferencing in a calendar year. In the case of (A) an organization created under the Interlocal Cooperation Act that sells electricity or natural gas, (B) an organization created under the Municipal Cooperative Financing Act, (C) a governing body of a risk management pool and any advisory committee of such governing body, or (D) any advisory committee of any state entity created in response to the Opioid Prevention and Treatment Act, such organization, governing body, or committee may hold more than one-half of its meetings by virtual conferencing if such organization holds at least one meeting each calendar year that is not by virtual conferencing.

(4) Virtual conferencing, emails, faxes, or other electronic communication shall not be used to circumvent any of the public government purposes established in the Open Meetings Act.

(5) The secretary or other designee of each public body shall maintain a list of the news media requesting notification of meetings and shall make reasonable efforts to provide advance notification to them of the time and place of each meeting and the subjects to be discussed at that meeting.

(6) When it is necessary to hold an emergency meeting without reasonable advance public notice, the nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes and any formal action taken in such meeting shall pertain only to the emergency. Such emergency meetings may be held by virtual conferencing. The provisions of subsection (5) of this section shall be complied with in conducting emergency meetings. Complete minutes of such emergency meetings specifying the nature of the emergency and any formal action taken at the meeting shall be made available to the public by no later than the end of the next regular business day.

(7) A public body may allow a member of the public or any other witness to appear before the public body by means of virtual conferencing.

(8)(a) Notwithstanding subsections (3) and (6) of this section, if an emergency is declared by the Governor pursuant to the Emergency Management Act as defined in section 81-829.39, a public body the territorial jurisdiction of which is included in the emergency declaration, in whole or in part, may hold a meeting by virtual conferencing during such emergency if the public body gives reasonable advance publicized notice as described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section. The notice shall include information regarding access for the public and news media. In addition to any formal action taken pertaining to the emergency, the public body may hold such meeting for the purpose of briefing, discussion of public business, formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action by the public body.

(b) The public body shall provide access by providing a dial-in number or a link to the virtual conference. The public body shall also provide links to an electronic copy of the agenda, all documents being considered at the meeting, and the current version of the Open Meetings Act. Reasonable arrangements shall be made to accommodate the public's right to hear and speak at

the meeting and record the meeting. Subsection (5) of this section shall be complied with in conducting such meetings.

(c) The nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes. Complete minutes of such meeting specifying the nature of the emergency and any formal action taken at the meeting shall be made available for inspection as provided in subsection (5) of section 84-1413.

(9) In addition to any other statutory authorization for virtual conferencing, any public body not listed in subdivision (3)(a) of this section may hold a meeting by virtual conferencing if:

(a) The purpose of the virtual meeting is to discuss items that are scheduled to be discussed or acted upon at a subsequent non-virtual open meeting of the public body;

(b) No action is taken by the public body at the virtual meeting; and

(c) The public body complies with subdivisions (3)(b)(i) and (ii) of this section.

(10) This section does not apply to a meeting of the Nebraska Power Review Board or a public power district, a public power and irrigation district, an electric membership association, an electric cooperative company, a municipality having a generation and distribution system, or a registered group of municipalities if such meeting is subject to section 70-1034.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 4; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 3; Laws 1987, LB 663, § 25; Laws 1993, LB 635, § 2; Laws 1996, LB 469, § 6; Laws 1996, LB 1161, § 1; Laws 1999, LB 47, § 2; Laws 1999, LB 87, § 100; Laws 1999, LB 461, § 1; Laws 2000, LB 968, § 85; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 38; Laws 2004, LB 1179, § 2; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 2; Laws 2007, LB199, § 9; Laws 2009, LB361, § 2; Laws 2012, LB735, § 1; Laws 2013, LB510, § 1; Laws 2017, LB318, § 1; Laws 2019, LB212, § 5; Laws 2020, LB148, § 3; Laws 2021, LB83, § 12; Laws 2022, LB742, § 1; Laws 2022, LB908, § 1; Laws 2022, LB922, § 13; Laws 2024, LB287, § 74; Laws 2024, LB399, § 4; Laws 2024, LB1370, § 8.

Note: The Revisor of Statutes has pursuant to section 49-769 correlated LB287, section 74, with LB399, section 4, and LB1370, section 8, to reflect all amendments.

Note: Changes made by LB287 became operative April 17, 2024. Changes made by LB399 became effective July 19, 2024. Changes made by LB1370 became operative July 19, 2024.

Cross References

- **Emergency Management Act**, see section 81-829.36.
- **Intergovernmental Risk Management Act**, see section 44-4301.
- **Interlocal Cooperation Act**, see section 13-801.
- **Joint Public Agency Act**, see section 13-2501.
- **Municipal Cooperative Financing Act**, see section 18-2401.
- **Opioid Prevention and Treatment Act**, see section 71-2485.

Annotations

- Under subsection (1) of this section, the Legislature has imposed only two conditions on

the public body's notification method of a public meeting: (1) It must give reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting and (2) it must be recorded in the public body's minutes. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).

- An emergency is "(a)ny event or occasional combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action or remedy; pressing necessity; exigency; a sudden or unexpected happening; an unforeseen occurrence or condition." *Steenblock v. Elkhorn Township Bd.*, 245 Neb. 722, 515 N.W.2d 128 (1994).
- An agenda which gives reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at a meeting of a city council complies with the requirements of this section. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).
- When notice is required, a notice of a special meeting of a city council posted in three public places at 10:00 p.m. on the day preceding the meeting is not reasonable advance publicized notice of a meeting as is required by this section. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).
- Teacher waived right to object to lack of public notice in board of education employment hearing by voluntary participation in the hearing without objection. *Alexander v. School Dist. No. 17*, 197 Neb. 251, 248 N.W.2d 335 (1976).
- A county board of commissioners and a county board of equalization are not required to give separate notices when the notice states only the time and place that the boards meet and directs a citizen to where the agendas for each board can be found. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- A county board of equalization is a public body which is required to give advanced publicized notice of its meetings. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- Notice of recessed and reconvened meetings must be given in the same fashion as the original meeting. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- True notice of a meeting is not given by burying such in the minutes of a prior board proceeding. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- An agenda notice which merely stated "work order reports" was an inadequate notice under this section because it did not give interested persons knowledge that plans for a 345 kv transmission line through the district was going to be discussed and voted upon at the meeting. Inadequate agenda notice under this section meant there was a substantial violation of the public meeting laws; however, later actions by the board of directors cured the defects in notice, and such actions were in substantial compliance with the statute. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).

84-1412. Meetings of public body; rights of public; public body; powers and duties.

(1) Subject to the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to attend and the right to speak at meetings of public bodies, and all or any part of a meeting of a public body, except for closed sessions called pursuant to section 84-1410, may be videotaped, televised, photographed, broadcast, or recorded by any person in attendance by means of a tape recorder, a camera, video equipment, or any other means of pictorial or sonic reproduction or in writing. Except for closed sessions called pursuant to section 84-1410, a public body shall allow members of the public an opportunity to speak at each meeting.

(2) It shall not be a violation of subsection (1) of this section for any public body to make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations regarding the conduct of persons attending, speaking at, videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording its meetings, including meetings held by virtual conferencing.

(3) No public body shall require members of the public to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting nor shall such body require that the name of any member of the public be placed on the agenda prior to such meeting in order to speak about items on the agenda. The body shall require any member of the public desiring to address the body to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented by such person unless the address requirement is waived to protect the security of the individual.

(4) No public body shall, for the purpose of circumventing the Open Meetings Act, hold a meeting in a place known by the body to be too small to accommodate the anticipated audience.

(5) No public body shall be deemed in violation of this section if it holds its meeting in its traditional meeting place which is located in this state.

(6) No public body shall be deemed in violation of this section if it holds a meeting outside of this state if, but only if:

(a) A member entity of the public body is located outside of this state and the meeting is in that member's jurisdiction;

(b) All out-of-state locations identified in the notice are located within public buildings used by members of the entity or at a place which will accommodate the anticipated audience;

(c) Reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the public's right to attend, hear, and speak at the meeting, including making virtual conferencing available at an in-state location to members, the public, or the press, if requested twenty-four hours in advance;

(d) No more than twenty-five percent of the public body's meetings in a calendar year are held out-of-state;

(e) Out-of-state meetings are not used to circumvent any of the public government purposes established in the Open Meetings Act; and

(f) The public body publishes notice of the out-of-state meeting at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting in a legal newspaper of statewide circulation.

(7) Each public body shall, upon request, make a reasonable effort to accommodate the public's right to hear the discussion and testimony presented at a meeting.

(8) Public bodies shall make available at the meeting or the in-state location for virtual conferencing as required by subdivision (6)(c) of this section, for examination and copying by members of the public, at least one copy of all reproducible written material to be discussed at an open meeting, either in paper or electronic form. Public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room at a location accessible to members of the public. At the beginning of the meeting, the public shall be informed about the location of the posted information.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 5; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 4; Laws 1985, LB 117, § 2; Laws 1987, LB 324, § 5; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1073; Laws 2001, LB 250, § 2; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 39; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 3; Laws 2008, LB962, § 1; Laws 2021, LB83, § 13; Laws 2024, LB43, § 21.

Operative Date: July 19, 2024

Annotations

- To preserve an objection that a public body failed to make documents available at a public meeting as required by subsection (8) of this section, a person who attends a public meeting must not only object to the violation, but must make that objection to the public body or to a member of the public body. *Stoetzel & Sons v. City of Hastings*, 265 Neb. 637, 658 N.W.2d 636 (2003).

84-1413. Meetings; minutes; roll call vote; secret ballot; when; agenda and minutes; required on website; when.

(1) Each public body shall keep minutes of all meetings showing the time, place, members present and absent, and the substance of all matters discussed.

(2) Any action taken on any question or motion duly moved and seconded shall be by roll call vote of the public body in open session, and the record shall state how each member voted or if the member was absent or not voting. The requirements of a roll call or viva voce vote shall be satisfied by a public body which utilizes an electronic voting device which allows the yeas and nays of each member of such public body to be readily seen by the public.

(3) The vote to elect leadership within a public body may be taken by secret ballot, but the total number of votes for each candidate shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) The minutes of all meetings and evidence and documentation received or disclosed in open session shall be public records and open to public inspection during normal business hours.

(5) Minutes shall be written or kept as an electronic record and shall be available for inspection within ten working days or prior to the next convened meeting, whichever occurs earlier, except that cities of the second class and villages may have an additional ten working days if the employee responsible for writing or keeping the minutes is absent due to a serious illness or emergency.

(6) Beginning July 31, 2022, the governing body of a natural resources district, the city council of a city of the metropolitan class, the city council of a city of the primary class, the city council of a city of the first class, the county board of a county with a population greater than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and the school board of a school district shall make available on such entity's public website the agenda and minutes of any meeting of the governing body. The agenda shall be placed on the website at least twenty-four hours before the meeting of the governing body. Minutes shall be placed on the website at such time as the minutes are available for inspection as provided in subsection (5) of this section. This information shall be available on the public website for at least six months.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 6; Laws 1978, LB 609, § 3; Laws 1979, LB 86, § 9; Laws 1987, LB 663, § 26; Laws 2005, LB 501, § 1; Laws 2009, LB361, § 3; Laws 2015, LB365, § 2; Laws 2016, LB876, § 1; Laws 2021, LB83, § 14; Laws 2022, LB742, § 2.

Annotations

- Under prior law, if a person present at a meeting observes and fails to object to an alleged public meetings laws violation in the form of a failure to conduct rollcall votes before

taking actions on questions or motions pending, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Hauser v. Nebraska Police Stds. Adv. Council*, 264 Neb. 944, 653 N.W.2d 240 (2002).

- Subsection (2) of this section does not require the record to state that the vote was by roll call, but requires only that the record show if and how each member voted. Neither does the statute set a time limit for recording the results of a vote, after which no corrections of the record can be made. If no intervening rights of third persons have arisen, a board of county commissioners has power to correct the record of the proceedings had at a previous meeting so as to make them speak the truth, particularly where the correction supplies some omitted fact or action and is done not to contradict or change the original record but to have the record show that a certain action was taken or thing done, which the original record fails to show. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 214 Neb. 85, 333 N.W.2d 652 (1983).
- Failure by a public governing body, as defined under section 84-1409, R.R.S.1943, to take and record a roll call vote on an action, as required by section 84-1413(2), R.S.Supp.,1980, grants any citizen the right to sue for the purpose of having the action declared void. In this case such failure could not be later corrected by a nunc pro tunc order because there was no showing that a roll call vote on the disputed action was actually taken, and even if it was the record showed it was not recorded until over a year later. Sections 23-1301, R.R.S.1943, and 23-1302, R.R.S.1943, make it the duty of the county clerk to record proceedings of the board of county commissioners. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 208 Neb. 69, 302 N.W.2d 674 (1981).
- There is no requirement that a public body make a record of where notice was published or posted. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).

84-1414. Unlawful action by public body; declared void or voidable by district court; when; duty to enforce open meeting laws; citizen's suit; procedure; violations; penalties.

(1) Any motion, resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or formal action of a public body made or taken in violation of the Open Meetings Act shall be declared void by the district court if the suit is commenced within one hundred twenty days of the meeting of the public body at which the alleged violation occurred. Any motion, resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or formal action of a public body made or taken in substantial violation of the Open Meetings Act shall be voidable by the district court if the suit is commenced more than one hundred twenty days after but within one year of the meeting of the public body in which the alleged violation occurred. A suit to void any final action shall be commenced within one year of the action.

(2) The Attorney General and the county attorney of the county in which the public body ordinarily meets shall enforce the Open Meetings Act.

(3) Any citizen of this state may commence a suit in the district court of the county in which the public body ordinarily meets or in which the plaintiff resides for the purpose of requiring compliance with or preventing violations of the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of declaring an action of a public body void, or for the purpose of determining the applicability of the act to discussions or decisions of the public body. It shall not be a defense that the citizen attended the meeting and failed to object at such time. The court may order payment of reasonable attorney's fees and court costs to a successful plaintiff in a suit brought under this section.

(4) Any member of a public body who knowingly violates or conspires to violate or who attends or remains at a meeting knowing that the public body is in violation of any provision of the Open Meetings Act shall be guilty of a Class IV misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class III misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense.

Source: Laws 1975, LB 325, § 9; Laws 1977, LB 39, § 318; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 5; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 126; Laws 1994, LB 621, § 2; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1074; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 40; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 4.

Annotations

- The Legislature has granted standing to a broad scope of its citizens for the very limited purpose of challenging meetings allegedly in violation of the Open Meetings Act, so that they may help police the public policy embodied by the act. *Schauer v. Grooms*, 280 Neb. 426, 786 N.W.2d 909 (2010).
- Any citizen of the state may commence an action to declare a public body's action void. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).
- The reading of ordinances constitutes a formal action under subsection (1) of this section. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).
- If a person present at a meeting observes a public meetings law violation in the form of an improper closed session and fails to object, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Wasikowski v. Nebraska Quality Jobs Bd.*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002).
- Under the Public Meetings Act, a county lacks capacity to maintain an action to declare its official conduct "void" for noncompliance with the act. *County of York v. Johnson*, 230 Neb. 403, 432 N.W.2d 215 (1988).
- When a petitioner under this section is successful in the district court, that court may allow attorney fees. *Tracy Corp. II v. Nebraska Pub. Serv. Comm.*, 218 Neb. 900, 360 N.W.2d 485 (1984).
- Informal discussions between the Tax Commissioner and the State Board of Equalization in which instructions were clarified, with such clarification leading to the amendment of hearing notices, did not constitute a public meeting subject to the provisions of this section. *Box Butte County v. State Board of Equalization and Assessment*, 206 Neb. 696, 295 N.W.2d 670 (1980).
- The right to collaterally attack an order made in contravention of the Public Meeting Act must occur within a period of one year as is specifically provided by this section. *Witt v. School District No. 70*, 202 Neb. 63, 273 N.W.2d 669 (1979).
- Statutory change, requiring "publicized notice" for board of education employment hearings, occurring between dates meeting scheduled and conducted, held not to void proceedings. *Alexander v. School Dist. No. 17*, 197 Neb. 251, 248 N.W.2d 335 (1976).
- Voiding an entire meeting is a proper remedy for violations of the Open Meetings Act. Once a meeting has been declared void pursuant to Nebraska's public meetings law, board members are prohibited from considering any information obtained at the illegal meeting. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- Actions by the board of directors were merely voidable under this section, and not void. Pursuant to subsection (3) of this section, the plaintiffs were awarded partial attorney fees because they were successful in having the court declare that the board of directors was in substantial violation of the statute, even though the plaintiffs did not get the relief requested of having the board's actions declared void. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).

2. Election of chair and vice chair.

3. Municipal Recognition Categories.



City of Columbus
Human Resources / Risk Management
2500 14th St. Suite 3
Columbus, NE 68601
402-562-4243
www.columbusne.us

DATE: October 21, 2024
TO: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator
FROM: Tammy Orender, Human Resource Director *T.O*
RE: Municipal Recognition Categories

RECOMMENDATION:

Update the Exemplary Service Award and Productivity Award categories.

DISCUSSION:

Attached is a redlined copy of the current Municipal Recognition Categories with a couple changes. I am requesting examples and accomplishments for the Exemplary Service Award and including Department Heads in the Productivity Award.

MUNICIPAL RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

EXTRACTED FROM FULL MUNICIPAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Recognition Program is structured to recognize a wide variety of achievements on the part of individual employees, the team efforts of departments, and the contributions made by citizens to the successful operation of municipal services. The Municipal Recognition Committee will evaluate each nomination based on its merit and stated awards criteria. An award in any category may be given to one or more persons, or to no person in a given year, based upon the determination of the Municipal Recognition Committee.

Persons are eligible to be nominated for and to receive recognition in the following categories:

1. **Citizen Volunteer Service Recognition.** This award may be given to recognize the civic contributions made by a citizen(s) such as a member of an advisory board, committee, commission, or other department operation.

Any citizen or employee may nominate a citizen involved on a City board, committee, or department activity. The award will be in the form of a plaque or similar form of award product. The decision of who receives a Citizen Volunteer Award rests with the Municipal Recognition Committee.

2. **Award of Valor.** An employee(s) who performs an act of heroism in the face of personal injury or risk of life to the employee, whether or not it is performed during his/her normal working hours, may receive this citation.

Any citizen or employee may nominate a City employee for this award. The Department Head who supervises the nominated City employee will also provide a short confirmation statement for the Municipal Recognition Committee, which makes the award decision. The award will be in the form of a plaque or similar award.

3. **Exemplary Service Award.** Awards may be given to those employees who have consistently, over a period of time, demonstrated excellent performance and productivity, loyalty, professional pride and other noteworthy accomplishments. A municipal employee who consistently exemplifies the values and professional standards of this organization in his/her daily performance may be nominated for this award.

Any citizen or employee may nominate a full-time or part-time City employee for this award. The Department Head supervising the nominated employee for this award should also provide a short confirmation statement for the Municipal Recognition Committee which makes the decision.

This award is given to recognize those employees who make significant contributions to the goals of the City by consistently demonstrating work performance clearly above and beyond what is normally required to meet the standards of their positions. **Please include examples and noteworthy accomplishments when nominating the employee.** The award will include a plaque and a monetary award of \$125, which will be added to the employee's taxable income. At the Municipal Recognition Banquet, the employee will receive a plaque and \$100 in Columbus Bucks. The remaining \$25 will be credited towards the employee's taxes.

4. **Productivity Award.** The purpose of this award is to encourage and to recognize productivity improvement of government services by City of Columbus employees.

Entries should be submitted to the immediate supervisor, who will forward them on to the Department Head with appropriate comments. The Department Head will then forward them to the Office of City Administrator.

In order for a suggestion to become eligible for a Productivity Award, it should be of such a nature, when implemented, to result in one or more of the following:

- a. Savings in time or materials.
- b. Improvement in procedures.
- c. Improvement in tools or equipment.
- d. Increased efficiency.
- e. Elimination of hazards to personnel.
- f. Improvements in public service without increased costs.

Any suggestion which falls within any of the following categories, shall not be eligible for an award.

- a. A suggestion that does not pertain to the City of Columbus.
- b. A request for additional equipment of a common nature or for obvious replacements, repairs, and maintenance.
- c. Any suggestion which, in the opinion of the Committee, duplicates or is very similar to any suggestion received previously.
- d. Any suggestion for a change that was already under consideration prior to the receipt of the suggestion.
- e. Any suggestion which fails to offer a constructive solution to any problem.
- f. Petitions or anonymous suggestions.

Up to four (4) entries with a max \$1,000 per entry will be available each year as to the value of the suggestion as determined by the Municipal Recognition Committee.

In the case of duplicate entries, the entry that is received first by the Office of City Administrator will be the only entry considered for an award. The Office of City Administrator will enter the date and time all entries are received.

All employees of the City of Columbus are eligible to receive awards except the following:

- **Department Heads**
- Employee(s) conducting research and/or development or assigned to a job requiring the solution of a specific problem where the suggestion submitted is found.

5. Continuing Education Award. This award will be given to encourage employees to obtain additional education as appropriate for their position.

This recognition will be given to those employees who, after approval by their Department Head, qualify for a state certification or receive a college degree or other significant evidence of advanced training. This recognition will not be given for required training. For those who receive a bachelors or advanced degree, an amount of \$125 will be paid to the employee in the same manner as for the Exemplary Service Award. Final approval must be given by the Municipal Recognition Committee.

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4. Strategic Plan 2024-2029.



The City of Columbus

RESPONSIBLE • RESPONSIVE • REPUTABLE

Administration Office (402) 562-4232

Fax (402) 563-1380

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 8th, 2025

FROM: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator

TO: Public Finance, Judiciary and Personnel Committee

RE: Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the Strategic Plan to the City Council.


DISCUSSION:

During 2024 elected officials and all City Departments conducted an analysis of their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The findings from those analysis was combined and organized to create four Strategic Priorities for the City of Columbus. Each Department was then asked to create, at least, one goal and action steps for each of the four Strategic Priorities. Those Goals and Action Steps have been compiled into this Strategic Planning document. Staff Leadership will work with their respective teams to accomplish their goals over the next few years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.

SIGNATURE:

By:  _____



City of Columbus, NE

STRATEGIC PLAN



2024-2029

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND..... 2

PURPOSE..... 2

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES..... 3

CITY MISSION..... 3

STRATEGIC PLAN..... 4-14

PERFORMANCE MEASURES..... 15



BACKGROUND

Beginning in the Summer of 2024, all elected officials and departments within the city completed an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). From that SWOT Analysis, the organization wanted to build an actionable plan for future advancements for each Department.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic plan is to create alignment across all departments towards common strategic priorities and provide guidance for the city's goals and program of work. It will assist with resource allocation and give all departments a tool to measure their contribution towards the progress of the city. Every Department plays a role in the success or failure of the city. "Where do we go from here?" is a question that must be answered as a whole unit. Having goals to work towards ensures we are all maintaining forward momentum, and allows our employees, supervisors, elected officials and members of the community to know what to expect from the city and what the city's current priorities are.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Four Strategic Priorities were identified based on the cumulative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of every City Department. Each department then came up with at least 1 goal for each of the strategic priorities.

The Strategic Plan is a master document of those goals.



CITY MISSION

WE AIM TO SAFEGUARD OUR THRIVING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY AND ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS, AND A VIBRANT, SECURE FUTURE FOR ALL.

Workforce

To cultivate a positive and supportive work environment that attracts, develops and retains team members.

Fire and Rescue

GOAL		
Action Items	Ensure proper succession within the department	Timeline
1	Develop an Acting Officer Program	2024
2	Review current hiring process and make changes if necessary to ensure the most qualified candidate is hired.	2025
3	Develop a career progression program for the Reserves.	2025
4	Develop a mentorship program for the Reserves.	2026
5	Develop a Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO) program.	2027
6	Establish development programs for all employee's career progression.	Continuously

GOAL		
Action Items	Maintain a positive and meaningful work environment for all members	Timeline
1	Establish a department-wide communication plan.	2024
2	Establish a formal process that allows fire department personnel to make recommendations for change within the department.	2024
3	Encourage active engagement and participation from all CFD personnel, through empowerment and communication.	Continuously
4	Hold at least one training event/seminar using outside instructors annually.	Annual
5	Implement a leadership training program for command staff, and provide the training quarterly.	Quarterly

Community Development

GOAL		
Action Items	Ensure training and certifications for each individual within the department	Timeline
1	Arrange for personnel from the building department to attend trainings, seminars, and webinars to enhance their knowledge and proficiency in the latest building codes and regulations.	2026
2	Sustain ongoing training efforts to optimize the functionality of the online permitting system.	2027

Engineering

GOAL		
Action Items	Establish an inter-department cross training program for critical work	Timeline
1	Determine what work needs to have cross training	2025
2	Determine which department team members will train on what	2026
3	Create a training and tracking schedule	2027

Workforce

General Administration

GOAL	Develop tools to allow city employees to more efficiently complete their work	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Standard Operating Office Procedure/Policy	1/2026
2	Program internal to City employee users	1/2027
3	Create policy and education on utilization of AI	9/2025

Joint Communications

GOAL	Create a working environment that encourages both employee recruitment and retention	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Promote a positive culture by having open communication. Help employees to feel valued and respected by regularly acknowledging their hard-work and achievements	Continuously
2	Maintain clear and attainable policies and standard operating procedures. Make sure employees always have access to these and they are reviewed on a regular schedule	Continuously
3	Practice strong leadership through transparency, support, guidance, and motivation	Monthly
4	Encourage professional development by providing opportunities for employees to attend in-person training	Quarterly
5	Create an internal mental-health protocol that needs to be followed after critical incidents	2025

Library

GOAL	We will support and train staff, empowering excellent service	
Action Items		Timeline
1	We will have written instructions and a plan for backup person(s) for Cataloging, Finance, Purchasing, Social Media, and Makerspace	2024

Parks and Recreation

GOAL	Create a work environment that helps us retain staff and attract continual seasonal and part-time staff when needed	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Create a marketing plan to attract younger seasonal workers (Aquatics/Parks)	2025
2	Take advantage of learning opportunities presented for Parks and Rec employees	2026
3	Create clear procedures, policies and processes for all divisions of Parks and Recreation	2027
4	Work with Communications Manager to celebrate wins/achievements and to be transparent with the community	2025

Workforce

Public Property

GOAL	Offer training and an environment that challenges staff to improve their skill-level while also developing enjoyment and satisfaction in their work	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Increase staff as programs and services continue to grow	2026
2	Increase wages for seasonal staff to help retention	2026
3	Provide safe and efficient equipment for staff to use	2025

Police

GOAL	Encourage employee retention and recruitment	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Test for officer candidates every 45 days until full.	Continuously
2	Continue apprenticeship and internship programs and maintain partnerships with area colleges to keep a feeder program.	Continuously
3	Continue to participate in college and High school job fairs to enhance recruitment opportunities	Continuously
4	Develop and Implement peer support program; train staff and administration	2025
5	Implement program for Professional Licensed Mental Health Provider to engage in mental health awareness for the Department.	2025

Efficient Delivery of City Services

To deliver exceptional services through the strategic use of resources and community engagement to create positive impact.

Fire

GOAL	Provide and maintain quality apparatus, equipment and facilities	DATE
1	Establish a preventative maintenance schedule for apparatus.	2024
2	Establish policies and procedures to ensure personnel are conducting the appropriate and necessary equipment, apparatus, and facility checks.	2025
3	Implement an annual nozzle testing program.	2026
4	Provide all personnel with two full sets of structural turnout gear and a set of hybrid rescue gear.	2027
5	Continue annual testing of hose, ground ladders, pumps, aerial devices, and SCBAs.	Annual
6	Replace outdated equipment through continued analysis of the current state of equipment. This is to be accomplished using budgeted funds.	Continuously

Community Development

GOAL	Develop and sustain educational resources for the general public and licensed contractors	Timeline
1	Create educational handouts to be featured on city website and online permitting portal	2025
2	Provide translated educational handouts in Spanish to facilitate understanding	2026
3	Collaborate closely with high schools/college fostering awareness of careers and job responsibilities within the field of Community Development	Annual

Engineering

GOAL	Update and add all department forms and applications for on-line use	Timeline
1	Identify existing forms which need updating and what new forms need to be created	2025
2	Locate or create sample documents requested in the forms	2025
3	Coordinate, where applicable, with other city departments	2026
4	Work with other city staff and BS&A on processing	2026

Efficient Delivery of City Services

General Administration

GOAL	Develop and maintain informational resources which are easily accessible to the public	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Create a resource that connects community needs with the appropriate contacts and provides information on frequently used services and commonly asked questions.	2/2025
2	Partner with GIS staff to create a searchable location map of cemetery plots, usable on website	8/2027
3	Develop an online based reservation, payment, management system for CCB rentable spaces	2026
4	Implement an automated call answering and sorting technology	3/2025
5	Explore implementing a Spanish version of the City website	2024

Joint Communications

GOAL	Ensure employees have the tools needed to efficiently do their job and promote 911 service	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Provide employees with monthly statistics to ensure they are staying within answering and dispatching parameters.	Monthly
2	Develop a continuity of operation plan	2025
3	Promote public education of 911 via website and in-person engagement.	Continuously
4	Coordinate with Centro Hispano to reach non-English speaking residents on translation services we have available, as well as other emergency services.	2025

Library

GOAL	We will review all policies and procedures, identifying and implementing efficiencies	
Action Items		Timeline
1	We will update and reapportion the To Do List and Progress Tracker in order to better distribute tasks between staff	2024

Parks and Recreation

GOAL	Create a department auditing system that encompasses both maintenance and programming	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Create an equipment replacement schedule and guidelines (maintenance equipment, playgrounds, etc.)	Continuously
2	Create a thorough program auditing system.	Continuously

Efficient Delivery of City Services

Public Property

GOAL	Improve community outreach	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Use social media and other media outlets to promote services	2025
2	Recruit more volunteers to help with expanding services	2025
3	Coordinate services with non-employed staff to reach more groups that currently do not use available city services	2026

Police

GOAL	Enable Department activities to be accessed online	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Make all Police Department forms accessible to the public on the website.	6/2025
2	Investigate and Determine applicability of online reporting for citizens	2026
3	Research new and emerging technology that could impact crime prevention and criminal activity; determine viability and possible implementation	2027

Community Relations

To foster a vibrant and informed community through open communication and engaging events.

Fire

GOAL	Establish a public relations program	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Designate a public outreach officer for the department.	2024
2	Bring back Junior Fire Patrol.	2028
3	Develop a high school program in conjunction with Columbus Public Schools, offering Firefighter and EMS training.	2028
4	Develop a better fire prevention program to consist of pre-planning of target hazards, and fire safety related programs.	2028
5	Conduct and annual open house.	Annual

Community Development

GOAL	Establish and maintain open lines of communication that address the needs and concerns of all residents	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Work with Communications Manager to create posts about community development department to increase public awareness of procedures, regulations and permitting process.	Annual
2	Improve responsiveness to public inquiries and concerns by establishing clear communication channels and response protocols.	Annual

Engineering

GOAL	Continue to improve communication on department projects with the public	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Determine content, volume and timing	2025
2	Establish department staff responsibilities	2026
3	Coordinate with other departments, as needed	Continuously
4	Website and social media coordination with Communications Manager	Continuously

General Administration

GOAL	Be a transparent and informative city by ensuring all residents have the opportunity to participate	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Create a social media campaign plan; update annually	6/2025
2	Develop a periodic newsletter	2027

Community Relations

Joint Communications

GOAL		
		Increase community engagement
Action Items		Timeline
1	Create a more thorough social media plan that includes posting on a regular schedule.	Daily
2	Add monthly information on the JCC website, such as call volume and call for service numbers.	Monthly
3	Take part in more community-based activities.	As Available
4	Continue to visit classrooms and keep our Kid's 911 Safety Patrol going.	Annually

Library

GOAL		
		We will create a sense of belonging and familiarity, engaging all senses
Action Items		Timeline
1	Building community relations through a family-oriented programming plan	2024

Parks and Recreation

GOAL		
		Create a transparent communication plan to the public
Action Items		Timeline
1	Work on transparency with the community and help to identify ways that community members can assist in being park advocates.	Continuously
2	Collaborate with PD on ways to get the community involved in helping to identify issues with vandalism.	2026
3	Create and adopt a "Pack in, Pack Out" policy for trash in the parks.	2026

Public Property

GOAL		
		Promote facilities to individuals that currently do not use them
Action Items		Timeline
1	Work to eliminate the stigma of the Senior Center is only for old people	2025
2	Promote opportunities for citizens to realize Columbus Area Transit can be used by anyone, not just the elderly	2025
3	Establish programs that promote minorities, elderly, and the handicapped to use our facilities	2026

Police

GOAL		
		Enhanced participation in community /public relation events
Action Items		Timeline
1	Utilizing social media to promote PD image and crime prevention message	Quarterly
2	Try to attend/participate in community events; do at least one event a quarter	Quarterly
3	Track and Evaluate events the Department participates in; determine if continued participation is the best use of resources.	2026

Collaboration

To strengthen our city by fostering partnerships between city departments, community organizations, and businesses.

Fire

GOAL	Maintain a strong working relationship with Columbus Community Hospital	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Work with hospital staff and management to determine if a ride-a-long program would be beneficial for ER staff to spend time in the field with CFD.	2026
2	Work with hospital staff and management to determine if a shadow time program would be beneficial for CFD staff to spend time in the ER with staff.	2026
3	Hold monthly continuing education sessions with the Medical Director, with one of those being an evening class geared towards the Reserves.	Monthly

GOAL	Maintain strong working relationship with City Administration	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Establish a reoccurring meeting schedule with the Mayor and City Administrator to meet with CFD staff.	2024
2	Establish an annual meeting with City Council members and CFD staff through small groups.	2024
3	Work to develop excellent working relationships with other city departments through collaboration and resource sharing.	Continuously

GOAL	Develop, maintain, and grow relationships with outside entities	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Strengthen relationship with CPD.	Continuously
2	Work to develop relationships with local businesses.	Continuously
3	Work with mutual aid partners to establish relationships that benefit all parties.	Continuously
4	Work to better our relationship with the Columbus Rural Fire District and streamline operations amongst both departments.	Continuously

Community Development

GOAL	Maintain strong working relationships with all other departments within the city	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Continue to collaborate and share resources with other departments	Annually
2	Share status reports with other departments	Monthly

Engineering

GOAL	Establish an engineering department education program for newly elected officials, appointed officials, and city staff	
Action Items		Timeline
1	Establish a policy for educational meetings	2025
2	Content creation of materials and delivery	2026
3	Create a communication plan with elected and appointed officials	2027

Collaboration

General Administration

GOAL	Increase public engagement opportunities	
Action Items	Timeline	
1	Create Engagement Activity with youth.	8/2025
2	Implement small group table talks.	1/2026

Joint Communication

GOAL	Work with other departments and agencies to establish better means of communication	
Action Items	Timeline	
1	Work with IT to see how departments can share calendars for on-call rotations, vacations, and major activities	2025
2	Have periodic meetings with law and fire agencies to go over successes and failures	Quarterly
3	Encourage agencies to allow dispatch to be part of briefings and de-briefings for planned incidents	As Arise

Library

GOAL	We will be recognized as valuable community members, sharing and growing our skills	
Action Step	Timeline	
1	We will create a document featuring six different community organizations, detailing their functions and services with the goal of identifying future areas of collaboration	2026

Parks and Recreation

GOAL	Increase partnerships between Parks and Rec and other city departments and community organizations who are seeking likewise goals and objectives of parks and recreation	
Action Items	Timeline	
1	Create a functional practice schedule for club teams to get the best use out of park facilities.	2025
2	Work with other departments (ex. Fire, police) in collaborating employee recreational events or for community outreach projects.	Continuously
3	Identify potential partners who have goals aimed in healthy living, youth and social development.	Continuously
4	Work with the Park Foundation to create goals.	2026

Public Property

GOAL	Engage users of facilities to take ownership	
Action Items	Timeline	
1	Provide ideas and suggestions to improve facilities	2025
2	Volunteer to follow thru on any ideas that they may have	2025
3	Recruit other volunteers to help with expansions or improvements	2026
4	Keep an up-to-date list of volunteers	2025

Collaboration

Police

GOAL	Maximize community/Regional/State partnerships in collaborative events to maximize	Timeline
Action Items		
1	Develop a relationship with Nationally recognized training programs to bring training to our department to enhance our work force and invite area law enforcement to participate	2025
2	Collaborate with Fire/EMS and Communications in responding to emergency situations; joint training	2026
3	Develop a response protocol for Mental Health Situations	2026
4	Unified Radios across all first responders	2029
5	Safety Training with Schools to reduce and prevent accidents and increase seat belt usage (Juvenile Services Team)	2026
6	Collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to develop a combined enforcement response plan for high volume areas.	2027

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Quarterly Staff leadership will complete a status update on the goal(s) and action step(s) they are working on.

The goals and action steps will be tracked through both quantitative and qualitative measures. Performance is monitored using the following:

- **Progress Dashboard:** Each goal and action step is reported with a progress percentage and status (On Track, At Risk, or Delayed), providing a visual and measurable overview of advancements.
- **Target Completion Dates:** Each action step is assigned a specific target date to ensure timely accountability.
- **Narrative Updates:** Detailed explanations offer context for progress, including successes, obstacles, and plans for resolution. When appropriate a summary of challenges and proposed solutions will be provided to ensure transparency and guide continuous improvement.
- **Success Stories:** Highlights of completed initiatives will be covered to emphasize the tangible impacts of the strategic plan.

These performance measures ensure that progress is systematically evaluated, challenges are addressed, and successes are celebrated, keeping stakeholders informed and engaged.

5. Propose change of meeting time.



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Memorandum

Date: January 8, 2025

To: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator & City Council

From: Shuraya Choat, City Clerk

RE: Changing the meeting time for Public Finance & Public Property.

Recommendation: I recommend either changing the meeting time for Public Finance / Public Property to 4:30 p.m. or keeping it at 4 p.m.

Discussion:

A city council member has proposed changing the meeting time for the Public Finance, Judiciary, and Personnel Committee from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Staff are open to either option, but would prefer the same meeting time for both committees. This item will be brought forward for discussion at the Public Property, Safety, and Works Committee on 1/13/25 and Public Finance, Judiciary, and Personnel Committee on 1/14/25.

Once a decision is made, I would propose adding the meeting times to the City Council Rules so that it can be reviewed (every other year) and easily amended, if needed.

Fiscal Impact: None

Alternative:

Signature:

By: Shuraya Choat

Approved By: [Signature]

6. Adjournment.