
To: BCC Staff Liaisons
From: Allyson Pulido, City Recorder
Date: December 3, 2025
Subject: Oregon Public Meeting Laws- Key Requirements and Practices

MEMORANDUM

Purpose of This Memo

This memo provides a summary of the most important Public Meetings Law (PML) requirements presented during the OGEC-certified training held November 3, 2025. This information is intended to help staff liaisons support their boards, commissions, and committees in meeting all legal requirements for transparency, accessibility, and compliance of public meetings.

1. Mandatory Training Requirements

Public Meetings Law training is mandatory **once per term of office** for members of governing bodies with **expenditures of \$1 million or more**. Governing bodies must keep records documenting the date, location, and presenter of the training.

Authority: OAR 199-050-0080(2)(3)

Members who serve on more than one qualifying governing body may complete **one training per term** that satisfies all bodies.

2. Intent of Oregon's Public Meetings Law

The law prioritizes an **informed public** and ensures that decisions are made **openly**, reflecting Oregon's strong commitment to transparent government.

Authority: ORS 192.620

3. What Constitutes a Public Meeting

A "meeting" occurs when:

- A **quorum** of a governing body
- **Convenes** (in person, electronically, or via serial communications)
- To **deliberate** or **decide** on any matter before the body

Authority: ORS 192.610(5)(7); ORS 192.610(1) (convening definition)

Serial Communications can be Meetings

Emails, texts, group messaging, social media comments, or intermediate communications between members **may create a prohibited serial meeting**. Avoid electronic communications if the subject will be discussed in a public meeting.

Authority: OAR 199-050-0005(10); OAR 199-050-0020(2)

4. Meetings That Are *Not* Public Meetings

The following are *not* public meetings as long as there is **no deliberation**:

- Site visits
- Attendance at conferences or association events
- Social gatherings
- Communications that are **purely factual**, unrelated to future decisions, or administrative (e.g., scheduling)

Authority: ORS 192.610(7)(b); OAR 199-050-0015(3)(c)

5. Legal Requirements for Public Meetings

A. Meetings Must Be Open to the Public

A quorum cannot meet privately to deliberate or decide on public business.

Authority: ORS 192.630(1)(2)

B. Location Requirements

Meetings must be held:

- Within city boundaries or administrative headquarters
- In locations accessible to persons with disabilities
- In locations free from discrimination

Authority: ORS 192.630(3)(5)

C. Virtual Accessibility Requirement

Public bodies must provide remote access and allow remote testimony whenever in-person testimony is allowed.

Authority: ORS 192.670(3); OAR 199-050-0050(3), (5)

6. Public Meeting Notice Requirements

Notice must include at minimum:

- Date, time, and location
- Electronic/virtual access information
- Major topics (agenda)
- Accessibility contact information

Authority: OAR 199-050-0040(3)

Notice Timing Requirements

- **Regular meetings:** ≥ 48 hours
- **Special meetings:** ≥ 24 hours
- **Emergency meetings:** as appropriate, with justification in minutes

Authority: ORS 192.640(1); OAR 199-050-0040(4)

7. Minutes and Records Requirements

Minutes or recordings must provide a "**true reflection**" of the meeting:

- Who was present
- Motions and outcomes
- Discussion summaries
- Votes by name (if ≤ 25 members)
- References to documents discussed

Authority: ORS 192.650(1); OAR 199-050-0060(1)(3)

8. Executive Sessions

Executive sessions must be:

- **Statutorily authorized**
- **Announced with citation** in agenda/notice
- Accessible to media (unless law states otherwise)
- Not used for final decisions

Authority: ORS 192.660(1)(6); OAR 199-040-0020; OAR 199-040-0060

Permitted Reasons Include (non-exhaustive):

- Personnel evaluations, discipline, or complaints
- Labor negotiations
- Real property transactions

- Litigation consultation (attorney must be present)
- Cybersecurity, infrastructure, and safety matters

Authority: ORS 192.660(2)(a)–(p)

Important: Compensation (salary/benefits) **cannot** be discussed in executive session.

9. Public Participation Rules

Oregon law requires only **public attendance**, not participation, except for:

- Land use hearings
- Budget committee hearings

Cities may adopt additional participation requirements in their own rules.

Remote oral and written testimony must be permitted when in-person testimony is accepted.

Authority: Presentation summary; ORS 192.670(3)

10. Grievance and Complaint Processes

A. Public Body Grievance (First Step)

A written grievance must be filed within **30 days** of an alleged violation.

The city must respond within **21 days** by:

- Denying,
- Admitting but denying violation, or
- Admitting and curing

Authority: ORS 192.705; OAR 199-050-0070(2)(5)

B. OGEC Complaint (Second Step)

A complainant may file with OGEC if:

- The city denies violation
- The city admits violation but fails to cure
- The city does not respond

Authority: ORS 192.685; OAR 199-050-0075

Civil Penalties

OGEC may impose up to **\$1,000 per member** for violations. Penalties are **personal liability**.

Authority: ORS 244.350(2); ORS 244.350(6)(a)

11. Court Remedies

Courts may:

- Void decisions made in unlawful meetings
- Award attorney fees
- Impose joint and several liability if violation was willful

Authority: ORS 192.680(3)(5)

12. OGEC Resources

Oregon Government Ethics Commission

Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/ogec>

Email: mail@ogec.oregon.gov

Phone: 503-378-5105

Secretary of State Chapter 199, Division 50: Public Meeting Law: <https://secure.sos.state.or.us/OARD>

BCC Liaison Resources: [S:\BOARDS COMMISSIONS COMMITTEES\TRAINING](#)