

S.55 An act relating to updating Vermont's Open Meeting Law

Key Points

- Updates take effect July 1, 2024, except for training requirements which take effect January 1, 2025.
- Divides public bodies into two categories:
 - Nonadvisory
 - Advisory: “Advisory body” means a public body that does not have supervision, control, or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or budgetary matters.
- Establishes different public access requirements for meetings based on category.
 - Nonadvisory: meetings must be hybrid. A physical location and electronic platform must be designated for each meeting.
 - Advisory: Meetings may be in person, remote, or hybrid. However, a resident of the geographic area, member of the public body, or member of the press may request designation of a physical location or electronic access in writing not less than two business days before a *regular* meeting.
- Nonadvisory meetings must be recorded and posted online for thirty days.
- Hearings held prior to elections may now be held within the thirty days prior to an election.
- Hearings held prior to an election must be video recorded and posted until certified votes are published.
- Town website must include procedures for submitting notice of an Open Meeting Law violation and a copy of 1 V.S.A. 314.
- Selectboard chair must annually attend a training provided by the Secretary of State's office.

Impacts to Bristol

- Discussion on the need to update the Open Meeting Law Training Policy and/or create a policy specific to meeting access. Specifically to:
 - Designate which Bristol public bodies are nonadvisory.
 - Specify format and submission process of written requests for public access to meetings of advisory public bodies.
- OR
- All meetings in Bristol will be hybrid regardless of category.
- Determine method for video recording informational hearings.
- Post Open Meeting Law violation process and statutes on website.
- Ensure chair annually attends trainings starting in 2025.