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Oregon Public Meetings Law

Oregon Public Meetings Law

192.610 Definitions for ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

As used in ORS 192.610 to 192.690:

"Decision" means any determination, action, vote or final disposition upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, ordinance or measure on which a vote of a governing body is required, at any meeting at which a quorum is present.

"Executive session" means any meeting or part of a meeting of a governing body which is closed to certain persons for deliberation on certain matters.

"Governing body" means the members of any public body which consists of two or more members, with the authority to make decisions for or recommendations to a public body on policy or administration.

"Public body" means the state, any regional council, county, city or district, or any municipal or public corporation, or any board, department, commission, council, bureau, committee or subcommittee or advisory group or any other agency thereof.

"Meeting" means the convening of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to deliberate toward a decision on any matter. "Meeting" does not include any on-site inspection of any project or program.

"Meeting" also does not include the attendance of members of a governing body at any national, regional or state association to which the public body or the members belong.

<1973 C.172 S2; 1979 C.644 S1>

192.620 Policy.

The Oregon form of government requires an informed public aware of the deliberations and decisions of governing bodies and the information upon which such decisions were made. It is the intent of ORS 192.610 to 192.690 that decisions of governing bodies be arrived at openly.

<1973 C.172 S1>

192.630 Meetings of governing body to be open to public; location of meetings; disabled access; interpreters.

All meetings of the governing body of a public body shall be open to the public and all persons shall be permitted to attend a meeting except as otherwise provided by ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

No quorum of a governing body shall meet in private for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision on any matter except as otherwise provided by ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

A governing body shall not hold a meeting at any place where discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin or disability is practiced. However, the fact that organizations with restricted membership hold meetings at the place shall not restrict its use by a public body if use of the place by a restricted membership organization is not the primary purpose of the place or its predominant use.

Meetings of the governing body of a public body shall be held within the geographic boundaries over which the public body has jurisdiction, or at the administrative headquarters of the public body or at the other nearest practical location. Training sessions may be held outside the jurisdiction so long as no deliberations toward a decision are involved. A joint meeting of two or more governing bodies or of one or more governing bodies and the elected officials of one or more federally recognized Oregon Indian tribes shall be held within the geographic boundaries over which one of the participating public bodies or one of the Oregon Indian tribes has jurisdiction or at the nearest practical location. Meetings may be held in locations other than those described in this subsection in the event of an actual emergency necessitating immediate action. This subsection does not apply to the Oregon State Bar until December 31, 1980.

It shall be considered discrimination on the basis of disability for a governing body of a public body to meet in a place inaccessible to the disabled, or, upon request of a hearing impaired person, to fail to make a good faith effort to have an interpreter for hearing impaired persons provided at a regularly scheduled meeting. The sole remedy for discrimination on the basis of disability shall be as provided in ORS 192.680.

The person requesting the interpreter shall give the governing body at least 48 hours' notice of the request for an interpreter, provide the name of the requester, sign language preference and any other relevant information the governing body may require. If a meeting is held upon less than 48 hours' notice, reasonable effort shall be made to have an interpreter present, but the requirement for an interpreter does not apply to emergency meetings.

If certification of interpreters occurs under state or federal law, the Oregon Disabilities Commission or other state or local agency shall try to refer only certified interpreters to governing bodies for purposes of this subsection.

As used in this subsection, "good faith effort" includes, but is not limited to, contacting the Oregon Disabilities Commission or other state or local agency that maintains a list of qualified interpreters and arranging for the referral of one or more such interpreters to provide interpreter services.

<1973 C.172 S3; 1979 C.644 S2; 1989 C.1019 S1; 1995 C.626 S1>

192.640 Public notice required; special notice for executive sessions, special or emergency meetings.

The governing body of a public body shall provide for and give public notice, reasonably calculated to give actual notice to interested persons including news media which have requested notice, of the time and place for holding regular meetings. The notice shall also include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects.

If an executive session only will be held, the notice shall be given to the members of the governing body, to the general public and to news media which have requested notice, stating the specific provision of law authorizing the executive session.

No special meeting shall be held without at least 24 hours' notice to the members of the governing body, the news media which have requested notice and the general public. In case of an actual emergency, a meeting may be held upon such notice as is appropriate to the circumstances, but the minutes for such a meeting shall describe the emergency justifying less than 24 hour notice.

<1973 C.172 S4; 1979 C.644 S3; 1981 C.182 S1>

192.650 Written minutes required; content; content of minutes for executive sessions.

The governing body of a public body shall provide for the taking of written minutes of all its meetings. Neither a full transcript nor a recording of the meeting is required, except as otherwise provided by law, but the written minutes must give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants. All minutes shall be available to the public within a reasonable time after the meeting, and shall include at least the following information:

All members of the governing body present;

All motions, proposals, resolutions, orders, ordinances and measures proposed and their disposition;

The results of all votes and, except for public bodies consisting of more than 25 members unless requested by a member, the vote of each member by name;

The substance of any discussion on any matter; and

Subject to ORS 192.410 to 192.505 relating to public records, a reference to any document discussed at the meeting but reference shall not affect the status of the document under ORS 192.410 to 192.505.

Minutes of executive sessions shall be kept in accordance with subsection (1) of this section. However, the minutes of a hearing held under ORS 332.061 shall contain only the material not excluded under ORS 332.061 (2). Instead of written minutes, a record of any executive session may be kept in the form of a sound tape recording which need not be transcribed unless otherwise provided by law. Material the disclosure of which is inconsistent with the purpose for which a meeting under ORS 192.660 is authorized to be held may be excluded from disclosure. However, excluded materials are authorized to be examined privately in court in any legal action and the court shall determine their admissibility.

<1973 C.172 S5; 1975 C.664 S1; 1979 C.644 S4>

192.660 Executive sessions permitted on certain matters; procedures; news media representatives' attendance; limits.

Nothing contained in ORS 192.610 to 192.690 shall be construed to prevent the governing body of a public body from holding an executive session during a regular, special or emergency meeting, after the presiding officer has identified the authorization under ORS 192.610 to 192.690 for the holding of such executive session. Executive session may be held:

To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent. The exception contained in paragraph does not apply to:

The filling of a vacancy in an elective office.

The filling of a vacancy on any public committee, commission or other advisory group.

The consideration of general employment policies.

The employment of the chief executive officer, other public officers, employees and staff members of any public body vacancy in that office has been advertised, regularized procedures for hiring have been adopted by the public body and there has been opportunity for public input into the employment of such an officer. However, the standards, criteria and policies used in hiring chief executive officers shall be adopted by the governing body in meetings open to the public in which there has been opportunity for public comment.

To consider the dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, unless such public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent requests an open hearing.
To consider matters pertaining to the function of the medical staff of a public hospital licensed pursuant to ORS 441.01:441.063, 441.085, 441.087 and 441.990 (3) including, but not limited to, all clinical committees, executive, credentials, review, peer review committees and all other matters relating to medical competency in the hospital.

To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations.

To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

To consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

To consider preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade or commerce in which the governing body is in competition with governing bodies in other states or nations.

To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation to be filed.

To review and evaluate, pursuant to standards, criteria and policy directives adopted by the governing body, the employment related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member unless whose performance is being reviewed and evaluated requests an open hearing. The standards, criteria and policy directives used in evaluating chief executive officers shall be adopted by the governing body in meetings open to the public in which there has been opportunity for public comment. An executive session for purposes of evaluating a chief executive officer or a public officer, employee or staff member shall not include a general evaluation of an agency goal, objective or operation or an agency's performance to personnel concerning agency goals, objectives, operations or programs.

To carry on negotiations under ORS chapter 293 with private persons or businesses regarding proposed acquisition, except liquidation of public investments.

Labor negotiations shall be conducted in executive session unless either side of the negotiators requests open meetings. Labor negotiations conducted in executive session are not subject to the notification requirements of ORS 192.640.

Representatives of the news media shall be allowed to attend executive sessions other than those held under subsection (1)(d) of this section relating to labor negotiations or executive session held pursuant to ORS 332.061 (2) but the governing body may require that specified information subject of the executive session be undisclosed.

No executive session may be held for the purpose of taking any final action or making any final decision.

<1973 C.172 S6; 1975 C.664 S2; 1979 C.644 S5; 1981 C.302 S 1; 1983 C.453 S1; 1985 C.657 S2; 1995 C.779 S1>

192.670 Meetings by means of telephonic or electronic communication.

Any meeting, including an executive session, of a governing body of a public body which is held through the use of telephone or other electronic communication shall be conducted in accordance with ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

When telephone or other electronic means of communication is used and the meeting is not an executive session, the governing body of the public body shall make available to the public at least one place where the public can listen to the communication.

the time it occurs by means of speakers or other devices. The place provided may be a place where no member of the governing body of the public body is present.

<1973 C.172 S7; 1979 C.361 S1>

192.680 Enforcement of ORS 192.610 to 192.690; effect of violation on validity of decision of governing body; liability of members.

A decision made by a governing body of a public body in violation of ORS 192.610 to 192.690 shall be voidable. The decision shall not be voided if the governing body of the public body reinstates the decision while in compliance with ORS 192.610 to 192.690. A decision that is reinstated is effective from the date of its initial adoption.

Any person affected by a decision of a governing body of a public body may commence a suit in the circuit court for the county in which the governing body ordinarily meets, for the purpose of requiring compliance with, or the prevention of violations of ORS 192.610 to 192.690, by members of the governing body, or to determine the applicability of ORS 192.610 to 192.690 to matters and decisions of the governing body.

Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, if the court finds that the public body made a decision while in violation of ORS 192.610 to 192.690, the court shall void the decision of the governing body if the court finds that the violation was the result of intentional disregard of the law or willful misconduct by a quorum of the members of the governing body, unless other equitable relief is available. The court may order such equitable relief as it deems appropriate in the circumstances. The court may order payment to a successful plaintiff in a suit brought under this section of reasonable attorney fees at trial and on appeal, by the governing body, or public body of which it is a part or to which it reports.

If the court makes a finding that a violation of ORS 192.610 to 192.690 has occurred under subsection (2) of this section and the violation is the result of willful misconduct by any member or members of the governing body, that member or members shall be jointly and severally liable to the governing body or the public body of which it is a part for the amount paid by the body under subsection (3) of this section.

Any suit brought under subsection (2) of this section must be commenced within 60 days following the date that the decision becomes public record.

The provisions of this section shall be the exclusive remedy for an alleged violation of ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

<1973 C.172 S8; 1975 C.664 S3; 1979 C. 644 S6; 1981 C.897 S 42; 1983 C.453 S2; 1989 C.544 S1>

192.685 Additional enforcement of alleged violations of ORS 192.660.

Notwithstanding ORS 192.680, complaints of violations of ORS 192.660 alleged to have been committed by public officials may be made to the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission for review and investigation as provided by ORS 244.260 and for possible imposition of civil penalties as provided by ORS 244.350.

The commission may interview witnesses, review minutes and other records and may obtain and consider any other information pertaining to executive sessions of the governing body of a public body for purposes of determining whether a violation of ORS 192.660 occurred. Information related to an executive session conducted for a purpose authorized by ORS 192.660 shall be made available to the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission for its investigation but shall be excluded from public disclosure.

If the commission chooses not to pursue a complaint of a violation brought under subsection (1) of this section at any time before the conclusion of a contested case hearing, the public official against whom the complaint was brought may be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable costs and attorney fees by the public body to which the official's governing body has authority to make recommendations or for which the official's governing body has authority to make decisions.






<1993 C.743 S28>





192.690 Exceptions to ORS 192.610 to 192.690.

ORS 192.610 to 192.690 shall not apply to the deliberations of the State Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision, the Psychiatric Security Review Board, of state agencies conducting hearings on contested cases in accordance with the provisions of ORS 183.310 to 183.550, the review by the Workers' Compensation Board or the Employment Appeals Board of similar hearings on contested cases, meetings of the state lawyers assistance committees, the local lawyers assistance committees in accordance with the provisions of ORS 9.545, the multidisciplinary teams required to review child abuse and neglect fatalities in accordance with the provisions of ORS 418.747, the peer review committees in accordance with the provisions of ORS 441.055, any judicial proceeding or to meetings of the Oregon Health Sciences University Board of Directors or its designated committee regarding candidates for the position of university president.

Because of the grave risk to public health and safety that would be posed by misappropriation or misapplication of information considered during such review and approval, ORS 192.610 to 192.690 shall not apply to review and approval of security programs by the Energy Facility Siting Council pursuant to ORS 469.530.

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