



Open Meetings Act (OMA) 101

Town of Barrington, RI

Recommended Readings/Resources

Please review the following resources for detailed information on definitions, agenda/minutes/other meeting requirements, public comment, exemptions/exceptions, etc.:

- [Open Meetings Checklist](#)
- [Open Government Summit \(YouTube video from the RI Attorney General's Office\)](#)
- [Chapter 46 of RI General Law: Open Meetings](#)

Definitions

Open Meetings Act (OMA):

- designed to make meetings transparent to the public to participate in public policy/discussion.

Public body:

A Committee, Commission, Board, etc.

- . “any department, agency, commission, board, council, bureau, or authority or any subdivision thereof of state or municipal government,” in addition to certain libraries.

Meeting:

This includes regular meetings, workshops, etc.

- “the convening of a public body to discuss and/or act upon a matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.”

Quorum:

Needed for a meeting to take place

- . “a simple majority of the membership of a public body.”

Need to Knows

All members of the committee must be physically present for meetings to participate (exception if one meets a specific exemption set forth in OMA).

- Even if a meeting has a hybrid option for the public, members must be in-person to be considered part of the quorum. Members may listen in via Zoom but may not participate in any way.

With email communication, members are advised to NOT “reply all” as to avoid a rolling/walking quorum.

- a “walking” or “rolling” quorum may be created where a majority of the members of a public body attain a quorum by a series of one-on-one conversations or interactions, whether in person or by electronic means.

The venue of a meeting must have ADA access.

- Example – if on a second floor, providing elevator access.

Additional Questions?

Please contact the member of Town Staff assigned to your public body (i.e. who posts the agenda). Either they will answer or refer the question to the Town's solicitor to provide an answer!