

Approved: _____
Revised: _____

I. PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Governing Board to conduct all business in an open and transparent manner. This is accomplished through public access to the business of the Board, as well as opportunities for the public to provide input for consideration by the Governing Board. This policy is intended to supplement, not supplant, the Open Meeting Law outlined in Louisiana state statute.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Meeting- A meeting is defined as:

1. The convening of members of the Governing Board for the purpose of conducting official board business, either formally or informally, whether it is discussion of matters before the board or if action is taken, and;
 - a. A majority (quorum) of the Governing Body is present.
 - b. A majority (quorum) of the Committee of the Board.
2. Vacant positions must be counted in determining a quorum and will not reduce the number of members required to be present to conduct business.
3. Meetings by telephone or video conferencing qualifies as a convening of Governing Board members if conditions in Section II.A.1 and II.A.1.a apply.
4. A chance or social gathering of a majority of the Governing Board does not constitute a meeting, provided discussions do not include Governing Board business.

III. POLICY

A. Public Notice of Meetings

1. The Board Chair is responsible for public meeting notification.
2. Every meeting notice must include the time, date, place, and subject matter of the meeting.

- a. An agenda with details on each item to be discussed should be included in the notice to provide the public with enough information to make an informed decision whether to attend.
 - b. If a closed session is on the agenda, the subject matter to be considered must be included.
3. Every meeting notice must be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.
4. Upon unanimous approval of the members present, the Governing Board may take up a matter not on the agenda. Any such matter shall be identified in the motion to take up the matter not on the agenda with reasonable specificity, including the purpose for the addition to the agenda, and entered into the minutes of the meeting.

B. Open Session Requirements

1. All meetings shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to the public, and open to the members of the public at all times.
2. All meetings shall be initially convened in open session. All business must be discussed and acted upon in open session, unless one of the exemptions noted in section III.D below apply.
3. The Governing Board is required to create and preserve a record of all motions and roll-call votes. Detailed meeting minutes should be taken at each regular board and committee meeting in order to provide the most transparent record of business by the Governing Board.

C. Closed Session Requirements

1. If a closed session is noticed on the publicly advertised agenda, then it must include the subject matter of the closed session.
 - a. If notice is not provided on the advertised agenda, it does not preclude the Governing Board's ability to go into closed session to discuss an item contained in the original notice.
 - b. The Governing Board must follow the procedure set forth in Louisiana statute before going into closed session. This is outlined in section III.C.2 below.
2. Procedure for Convening in Closed Sessions
 - a. Meeting must initially be convened in open session
 - b. The Governing Board must pass a motion, by recorded majority vote, to convene in closed session.

- i. Before the Board votes on the motion, the Board Chair or designee must announce and record in open session the nature of the business to be discussed and the specific statutory exemption, found in Louisiana statute 42.18 to authorize the closed session.
 - c. No items not disclosed on the exemption shall be discussed or considered in closed session.
3. The Governing Board may admit anyone to the closed session whose presence the board determines is necessary for the consideration of the subject of the closed session.

D. Enforcement and Penalties of Open Meeting Law

1. Violation of Louisiana Open Meeting Law is subject to penalties outlined in Louisiana statute R.S: 42.28.

E. Public Input at Meetings

1. An opportunity for public comment prior to action on the agenda item upon which a vote is to be taken is required by Louisiana state law.
 - a. Comment must be taken immediately prior to each individual vote.
2. The board can also choose to set aside time at regular board meetings for public input.
3. All public comment will utilize the following procedure:
 - a. Members of the public wishing to speak shall indicate his/her intent in writing or via communication with the Board Chair.
 - i. A sheet to provide the name of speaker and the topic to which they wish to speak shall be present and available to the public at all open meetings. If the meeting is virtual, the Board Chair shall make note of a speaker's name and topic of input.
 - b. The Board Chair or his/her designee shall call on members of the public.
 - c. Each speaker shall be limited to 3 minutes, except as provided for in section III.E.1.e below.
 - d. Any speaker making defamatory, belligerent, or accusatory comments may be denied his/her 3 minutes of speaking time.
 - e. The public comment period is limited to thirty minutes unless extended by the board chair.
 - i. The board chair may reduce the speaking time allotted to each speaker or refuse to grant all members of the public wishing to speak the opportunity to do so in order to comply with this provision.

Legal Reference: [LA R.S. 42.11-29](#)