



Open Meeting Law

AMSA BOARD OF TRUSTEES, JAN. 5, 2023

Virtual Meeting Guidance

Due to COVID pandemic concerns we have been allowed by order of the Governor to hold virtual meetings. Currently, the Governor's order is in effect until March 31, 2023.

The Governor's order allows us to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a single meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings – which we do through streaming the meeting or having a call in option. All other portions of OML remain applicable to our Committee and Board Meetings.



Therefore, a majority of Trustees can only discuss matters governed or under review by the board when the meeting has been posted and the public has access.

ADVICE: When in doubt, talk about something other than AMSA business (suggestions: anything from People magazine, favorite cookie recipes, what superpower you would like to have.)

FAQs – May Trustees communicate over email?

May a Trustee communicate with other trustees over email?

Yes, but only in limited circumstances. A trustee can email other on matters within our jurisdiction so long as the email does not reach a quorum of the board body. Communications between and among a quorum of the Board on matters within our jurisdiction must occur during a noticed meeting. G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18, 20. A public body member may lawfully email a quorum of the public body only to discuss scheduling a meeting, distribute a meeting agenda, or to distribute reports or documents to be discussed at a meeting, provided that no opinion of a member of the public body is expressed. See G.L. c. 30A, § 18.

This is why it is imperative with committee and board information emails that no discussions, substantive “reply all’s” follow the initial email.

FAQs – May Trustees communicate with the public through social media?

Yes, Trustees may communicate with members of the public through any social media platform. However, Trustees must be careful not to engage in deliberation with the other Trustees through such media.

Webinar Trainings

The Commonwealth offers online trainings on OML. Below are two upcoming trainings and links to register.

1). Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 1:00 PM– 2:30 PM

Link to register:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hj-UttjWQ4eNcgJKkSFEOA

2). Monday, January 23 at 6:30 PM– 8:00 PM

Link to register:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_U_jg28GNTViHbgv422ZUuw

Resources

OML Guide: https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/11/15/2017%20Guide%20with%20ed%20materials_revised%201-30-18.pdf

Executive Session Checklist: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/02/public-body-checklist-preliminary%20screening%20committee.pdf>

Meeting Posting Checklist: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/Public%20Body%20Checklist%20-%20Notice.pdf>

Minutes Checklist: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/Public%20Body%20Checklist%20-%20Minutes.pdf>